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by FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE

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Vol. 117, No. 4 **for** **Best of New Stories**

August, 1947

NOVELETTES

Stand by Your Guns..... .R. W. DALY 8

Spaniards, Dutchmen, Frenchmen, pirates—none of 'em had ever stopped the Spencers, father and son, from sailing their ships from profit to profit, and Bart was damned if a little thing like war with England was going to keep him and the *Sarah* from carrying on the family tradition. Personally, he couldn't ever remember being oppressed by George III, and as for glory—well, it was a more tangible reward he wanted. Money was the thing, and what could be more important to an ambitious man in this year of our Lord, 1778?

Flight from Nome.....FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE 56

Gas gauge registering empty the gale-tossed DC-3 circled above those frozen frontier wastes headed for a certain crack-up. "Lucky" Lynch, ex-bomber pilot, wasn't so lucky now, with a payload of human beings instead of bombs riding behind him. People like Father Carney, the ten-months-old McGee kid and his mother, Old Man Kent, and Big Kate who ran the dance hall in Nome. . . . A motley cast of characters to play out grim tragedy in blizzard-laden skies, each facing death in his or her own way and wondering what it would bring. . . .

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Old Bunyoyo's Bones..... ALEXANDER WALLACE 46

I was done for and I knew it. The Cape Town syndicate that had sent me to the sun-baked flats along the Kunene River between Portuguese West Africa and the Union wanted gold—but damned if I hadn't dredged up Bunyoyo's sacred bones instead! The Ovambos' drums started beating out their vengeance-rhythm and God knows what would have happened if Sergeant Devenny—that imperturbable minion of the South African Police—hadn't intervened. I owe my life to him . . . and he owes *his* to the fact that I never went back after I learned how he managed it!

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BE OUT ON AUGUST 8TH ◆ ◆ ◆

A Dingo for Delilah..... JULES ARCHER 84

Hoppy, the worst sheep-killer in all the New South Wales back-bush, had swooped down for a wholesale blood-letting among the terrified flocks. Now if ever, figured MacLachlan of the Dingo Destruction Board, was the time to enlist the reluctant aid of Jack Carter, owner of the great Noorie Station, in his campaign to rid the country of the marauding pests. But when he told the stockman his plan for catching Hoppy, Carter nearly died laughing. Mac wasn't going to trap or shoot or poison the predator—he was merely planning to put a female of the species on his tail and henpeck that warrigal to death!

Hungar McPholly's Ghost..... WILLIAM WARNER GRAHAM 94

McPholly vowed on his deathbed that his spirit would never rest easy till Belew Burkitt gave his blessing to the nuptials of his daughter, Forlorn, and Hungar's son, Plato—thus to perpetuate the proud McPholly name. Now, as Burkitt pointed out to his lovesick offspring (with the aid of a strap) the two families had had no truck with one another since the miracle that took place in Hungar's hogpen back in '25. But the shade of Hungar McPholly was a stubborn spectre and come fire or firewater it wouldn't be denied.

Charley Hoe Handle vs. Man's Best Friend..... JIM KJELGAARD 108

Stick County wardens had been trying in vain for thirty years to catch Charley red-handed and Horse Jenkins—the district's current game protector—had come to the sensible conclusion that no man ever would. But a bloodhound—that was different. Not even the wily Charley was sly enough to elude the super-sensitive proboscis of that sad-eyed beast. Or that's what Jenkins thought till the time that old swamp-cat Injun came up with a trick that made a monkey out of the hound and a donkey out of Horse!

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August 1896—gold at Bonanza Creek, Yukon Territory! News of the strike touched off a stampede northward from Seattle. Every available craft was at a premium so Bob Moran set about building a flotilla of shallow-draft stern-wheelers ill-equipped to hazard the open sea. It was a crazy venture but Lloyd's of London was willing to gamble on it—not to mention sixteen boatloads of nugget-hungry adventurers.

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Cover painted for Adventure by Peter Stevens
Kenneth S. White, Editor

THE CAMP-FIRE

Where Readers, Writers and Adventurers meet

FOUR additions to the ranks of our Writers' Brigade this month—a brace of yarn-spinners and the authors who contribute the two fact stories on our contents page. We'll ask them to introduce themselves in that order. Alexander Wallace, whose "Old Bunyoyo's Bones" you'll find on page 46, says—

I was born in Victoria, B. C. September 21, 1900. Sailed for England March 27, 1915 on the same day that my father's ship, H.M.S. *Princess Irene,* was blown up in Sheerness Harbor. All hands lost.

A year later, I was apprenticed to the sea; signed my indentures in the offices of the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services, Liverpool, and joined my ship, the *Monmouth.*

During the war years we tramped across five of the seven seas. We called at many African ports: Suez, Aden, Durban, Cape Town, Zanzibar, Lourenço Marques—that beautiful, little Portuguese town bewitched me, or somebody in it did. I left with the firm resolve to return.

After the war and when I had passed my Board of Trade examinations, I signed on a ship under charter to the Companhia de Moçambique and sailed for Africa. The little I know of Africa at first hand, I owe to the years I served aboard that dirty little coaster with her native crew (excepting officers) of Zanzibaris and the Lord knows what else!

Sometimes passengers occupied one or all of her six lousy cabins; men and women of all nationalities and from every walk of life —missionaries, salesmen, traders, engineers, doctors and writers in search of material, among which there were some whose names are now well known. They talked, argued and swapped tall yarns in the dingy saloon of the *Cabo Delgado.* They came and were gone, leaving behind them the strong flavor of the Dark Continent and a young sailor playing with the idea that one day he would write much of what he had heard and a little of what he had seen.

But I had returned to my own country, married, and acquired four fine daughters and a son, before I got around to it. Slightly injured January, 1943, I was discharged from the Navy in May of the same year. Since then I have given my time to writing.

Like most of the stories I have had published, "Old Bunyoyo's Bones" could be traced

(Continued on page 137)

Letter to an actual Bill

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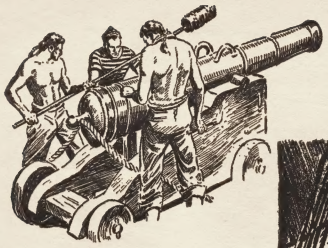


STAND BY YOUR GUNS

By

R. W. DALY

ILLUSTRATED BY V. B. PYLES

HE HAD a quick temper. Even his mother admitted that. Bart Spencer was not a man to cross, particularly when Nature had joined that temper to a two-hundred pound body ranging over six feet in height. Withal, however, he was a gentleman.

"If that is your opinion," he said, "I'd better go."

"Yes," Sarah Turnbull replied contemptuously. "You'd better."

Spencer bowed and left the drawing room, silently took his cloak and hat from a table in the hall, and stepped out of the Turnbull house into the dismal, chill haze of a New London March afternoon. The weather suited his mood. Chin sunk into high collar, he strode down the road to Bank Street. The swirling fog failed to soothe his anger. "What concern is it of hers?" he muttered to himself.

Passing by the office of the Connecticut Navy Agent, he scowled at the flag dangling soddenly from a pole thrust over the

In all, scarcely a dozen broadsides bought the firm of Spencer & Son a new brig.

street, and continued on his way to the buildings of Spencer & Son. People greeted him from time to time and received a savage grunt in return for their courtesy. His secretary was better acquainted with his moods, however, and did not make the mistake of being cheerful, standing to one side as he stormed into his office.

When he had a glass of rum in his vitals, and the crackling fire had dried him out a bit, he rang a bell for Bates. Almost at once his secretary entered, sat down at the desk, and prepared for any contingency, from writing a letter to reporting on the profits of the last cargo in from Brest.

"Bates," Spencer said, "I'm a damned fool."

Bates said nothing. Such comments were not unusual when young Spencer had just visited Sarah Turnbull. In his own opinion, Spencer was nothing of the sort, but then, Bates, being poor, had an undemocratic respect for wealthy men, even if they were scarcely launched into their twenties.

"I should have married her years ago," Spencer said, "and the devil with her parents."

Since Mistress Sarah Turnbull was as beautiful as she was young and rich, Bates had no argument to offer in denial of the wisdom of this outburst, although he did in principle disapprove of lawlessness. If the Turnbulls for some queer reason wanted the pleausure of their only daughter until she was eighteen, that was their affair and none of his. Of course, he sympathized with the son of his old employer. A score of years married to a plain, wholesome woman, Bates at times would have given much for the chance to start all over again.

"Do you think my father would have sat back?" Spencer asked thoughtfully, toasting his toes before the fire.

Bates knew the question was rhetorical, just as he knew the answer was obvious. Bart's father had never let anything stand in his roisterous way. The Spaniards, Dutch, French, pirates, no one stopped him from sailing his ships from profit to profit. Indeed, staying snug in New London, having chosen the security of an accounting job rather than the dangers of the open sea, Bates had come to believe that the elder Spencer lived life as a test of strength rather than as a preparation for the hereafter. His envy of such carefree exuberance had never stimulated him to imitation, since even the ferry trip to Groton made him seasick, but Bates steadfastly admired his employer as the man he might have been.

"Bates," Bart asked suddenly, "do you think I'm wrong?"

The secretary was startled. "Wrong, Mr. Spencer?" he stammered, round little face reflecting his internal struggle between truth and tact. "Well, sir, a young lady's—"

"Bates," interrupted the young shipowner, squaring his shoulders, "you know what I'm talking about." His black eyes rested heavily upon the elder man, who did not gaze back.

"That's a matter for yourself to decide, Mr. Spencer," Bates replied gently but firmly.

BART stamped his feet down onto the floor, stood up, and tramped to the window which looked out upon the dock. There, tenuous in the fog, his three-hundred-ton *Sarah* tugged at the lines which bound her to the bollards. He stared at her sturdy, Yankee hull which carried Yankee goods that would bring triple the pre-war prices in any Continental port. That cargo could pay for two more ships like the *Sarah,* larger by many tons than the average merchantmen clearing from Colonial ports. He saw his fortune pyramiding out of all sensible reckoning. Given a few more years of war, and he could buy New London, Turnbulls and all. He saw nothing wrong with his hopes, nothing at all. But Sarah did, and Sarah was blunt.

"I can not marry a man fattened on blood," she said. "Go and get richer."

This attitude struck Bart as most unreasonable. There were three million people in the thirteen Colonies. Three million to fight a war for independence. What difference would it make if he offered his every shilling to the cause? It would be a tiny, tiny bit, unnoticed in the total. And what difference would it make if he did not? None to the fight, but everything to him. Chances like this came only once in a lifetime. His father had built a fortune out of the French and Indian War, and been admired by his

neighbors, despite the few who thought he might have taken a hand in Louisburg.

He had attempted to explain this to Sarah, showing her that he was doing his share by trade, which not only brought desperately needed goods into the Colonies, but reaffirmed the existence of the Rebellion every time he carried the Connecticut flag into a Continental harbor. Sarah was unconvinced. "If you're a trader," she asked, with the illogic of women, "then why do you have all those guns and men? Why do you have a privateer's commission from the Congress?"

He had considered this objection almost infantile, and did not perhaps answer it as seriously as Sarah could have wished, when he explained that a hundred and thirty men at double wages and bonuses were barely enough to fight eighteen six-pounders in case he had to claw his way through British cruisers. As for the privateer's commission, that to him was merely additional insurance in event he proved lucky enough to stumble upon an unescorted British merchantman; without the commission, he would be committing piracy if he attacked, but with it, a capture would be legal and aboveboard.

Instead of being persuaded, Sarah had smiled and said innocently, "If it's fighting you want, then why not join either the Continental Navy or that of our Colony? Captain Deshon told father he was most anxious to have you."

Perceiving that he was chasing about in circles, Bart nonetheless patiently reiterated the complexities of his position, and Sarah had heard him through, and then she had said the words which had put him at last into his open rage. "You're the most selfish man in America, Mr. Spencer. I can not marry a man fattened on blood. Go and get richer."

And he had gone.

"You're no help, Bates," he said.

"None, sir," Bates admitted readily.

Bart turned away from the window. "Well," he said with sudden decision, "I may as well go now as later. If you hear guns, tell my mother."

"Yes, sir," Bates said, automatically picking up the *Sarah's* clearance papers, and holding them as Bart stepped into his sea boots. "Be careful."

Bart grinned. "Don't worry," he laughed, "I'll take good care of your private stores." Boots on, he accepted the *Sarah's* papers. He clumped out of his office, flung on a raincoat in the hall, tramped down the steps and went out into the protective mist. After he had gone, Bates poured himself a glass of rum, went to the window, and watched activity burst upon the *Sarah*. Sipping the rum, he was comfortable while men struggled with the cold and wet to shake out sail and single up the lines. It was nightfall before the dockhandlers cast off the eyes, and the ship slipped away on the ebb from the dock, sails filling to the northwest wind. As she moved out to the stream and obscurity, Bates set down the glass and left the office.

Aboard the drifting *Sarah*, Bart unconcernedly conferred with his mates, who were still somewhat resentful of the disruption of their plans for the evening. "She won't have her boats out in this weather," he predicted. "She'll probably be in the lee of Fisher's Island. We shouldn't have any trouble."

The three mates were less sanguine about His Majesty's frigate *Cerberus*, which patrolled the entrance to the Thames River as efficiently as her namesake patrolled the entrance to Hades. Her record of Yankee captures was depressing, and she had ended the fortunes of several prosperous New London shippers. Her captain was an old hand at the game of blockade. Her territory was the narrow end of the funnel which is called Long Island Sound. Thanks to the shoals and rocks, the *Cerberus* had only to make a three-mile sweep to cover her station perfectly.

The *Sarah's* first mate, Malloy, quietly spoke for his comrades. "She'll be where we don't expect her, Captain. That's always the way with her."

SPENCER had an ear cocked to the leadsmen whose soundings were going to take them blindly down the Thames past Southwest Ledge and through the Race. "All right, then," he said amiably, "I don't expect her to be anchored for the night off Fisher's Island. She'll be this side or the other of the Race, because someone as usual told her we were coming."

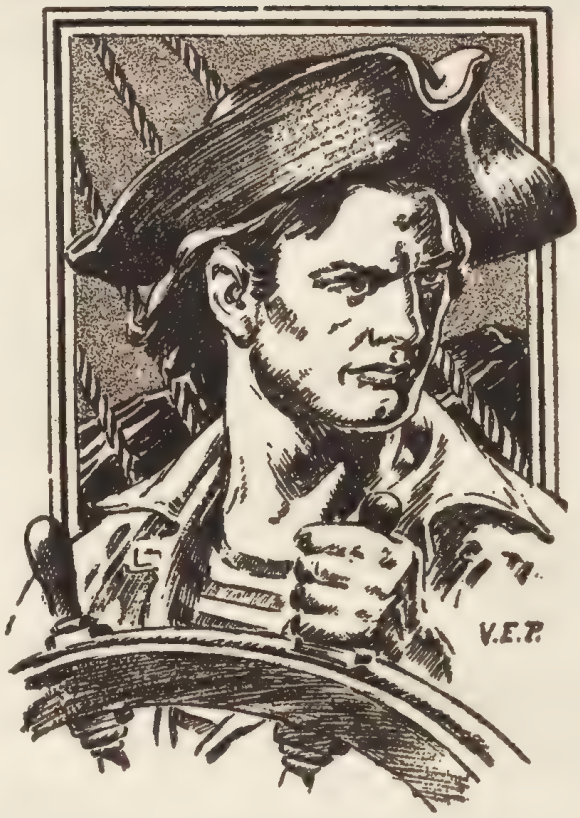
The mates were obliged to laugh, since no one of the Tory spies had ever gotten word about the *Sarah* to the *Cerberus* in time. Not the way Captain Spencer sailed on a moment's notice in fog or rain or night when sensible captains hugged the beach. Indeed, when ashore, the *Sarah's* mates were proud of the manner in which their skipper outwitted the blockade. Four times they had safely escaped to the open sea past Montauk Point, and in their hearts confidence had long ago surmounted fear.

The posture of their stalwart captain was enough to calm all except the most excitable man. Tall, heavy-shouldered, alert, he stood by the binnacle like a monument erected to the American seaman, as steady and solid as rock. From time to time he gave commands to the helm, as eddies of the ebb tide caused the *Sarah* to veer from her course. Bart could not name the shops for a block to either side of his office on Bank Street, but he could have drawn a chart of the course downstream out through the Race and in the drawing would have made fewer than a dozen errors in soundings. At times, shoals have their advantages, and to a captain seeking to sail in complete darkness, friendly shoals are allies.

"Mr. Malloy," Bart said, after a time, "run out the guns."

"Aye aye, sir," replied the mate, and set about making the *Sarah* a formidable objective for any stray British boatcrew to tackle. Malloy had followed the routine often enough to know what was expected of him. The six-pounders were best loaded with grape. Should the *Sarah* trip over a longboat, her guns would then rip boarders to tatters. Should she fall afoul of the redoubtable *Cerberus,* although her solid shot would stick in the frigate's oaken sides, some of the four-score half-pound balls from her broadside might slash through open ports or sweep the frigate's quarterdeck, and that might be enough to give the *Sarah* her chance to escape. With a clean bottom and expert seamanship, a chance was all she needed.

The *Sarah's* battery was open to the sky and under her captain's eye. Spencer critically watched his quarterdeck guncrews ready their pieces. He had some new men aboard, as usual having since his last voyage lost some to the Navy, and he wanted to see how much Malloy had been able to do with the new hands.



Bart Spencer

If Spencer had any extravagance, it was the waste of man-hours spent in gun drills. Old-timers claimed they had never seen anything like it even in the Royal Navy, although Spencer would never have taken that service as a model. Claiming pistol range as their tactical goal, the British let gunnery go in preference to emphasis upon seamanship, believing that the best handled ships could force their will and plan of battle. Not so Spencer. By his insistence, the ships of his firm drilled at their guns an hour a day, fair weather or foul, grumbling or no.

Of course, to his way of thinking, Spencer was only protecting his investment in ships and goods, and his rates of pay made the complaints of his crew less justified than perfunctory. Too many owners of valuable cargoes sought to squeeze the last pound of money from their ventures and foolishly sent their ships onto a warring sea with the smallest possible number of sailors, who thus were easy prey for any adroit privateer, no

matter how poorly armed. Bart, however, had no dread of any privateer, and was indeed willing to take his chances with a regular sloop-of-war. His firm had yet to lose a vessel, so if his margin of profit was less than that of his competitors, it was stable, and he was still vastly ahead of most of his more grasping but less far-sighted rivals.

"Guns are out, sir," Malloy reported cheerfully.

"Very well," Bart replied. "Let us inspect them."

After a stroll about the deck, some five minutes later Bart delivered himself of a few succinct remarks, and Malloy was less cheerful. At the end, Bart sent him forward to add his keen vision to the bow lookout as the *Sarah* glided past New London Light and entered the Sound. If she were going to have trouble, that trouble would be most disastrous within the next two hours.

Despite confidence in their ship and captain, tension slowly began to strangle the thoughts of the crew until their minds were filled only with the night, fog and the British. Although less than a watch separated them from the Spencer dock, each man felt as though the *Sarah* had been cruising for months. The moment when Bart himself took the helm merely heightened their concern for their immediate safety.

The experienced leadsmen chanted soundings every minute and Bart plodded them on his mental chart, easing the *Sarah* to starboard or port to keep her headed for the Race. In peace, the passage was sufficiently hazardous to make the men worry, but in war, they were almost able to forget the worries offered by Nature. The *Cerberus* was worry enough.

THE fog was twisting shadows into the shape of the patrolling frigate. In the bows, Malloy almost reported her a dozen times looming in the haze ahead, and each time was saved from Bart's temper only by a native Yankee suspicion of the apparent. In turn, conditioned by the captain's way with incompetence, Malloy testily scorned the lookout's constant suspicion that thole pins were creaking and oars splashing. Naturally, then, the lookout came to doubt his own senses and so, some thousand yards from the Race, neglected to mention the sound of voices which came faintly to his ears. Thus Malloy had the dubious joy of sending word aft that the *Cerberus* had her boats out prowling.

Spencer was somewhat shaken by the news, even though his acknowledgment of the message was casual. This marked his first failure to divine the activities of the British and he was struck by the sudden, significant thought that his recent quarrel with Sarah might well have robbed her namesake of her past good luck. Being as superstitious as the next sailorman, he was unable to quiet such an alarming thought, and took relief in activity.

"Light your matches," he said to Tarrant, the mate of the watch. "Belay soundings."

There was little sense in advertising their presence, even though they had the advantage of knowing the British were about. When the leadsmen stopped their chant, only the breaking of water and the sputtering of slow matches over open tubs delicately disturbed the absolute quiet which Bart needed in order to hear their enemy.

Taking reefs in his topsails, Spencer slowed down the *Sarah* until the wind barely pushed her towards the Race. Tense, straining his faculties, Bart turned his head this way and that, trying to locate the British boats in the deceptive night. He was not surprised at their voices, being well able to imagine the murmuring with which the sodden seamen served as pickets to their frigate. No one had any business being abroad in that weather, and the Navy men would be lonesome for the damp comfort of their unheated home and the solace of their hammocks.

He found satisfaction in the presumption that the *Cerberus* was almost certainly at anchor, else she would not have had her boats drifting about. He guessed that they had gone out from the frigate with compass courses at sunset and had taken station in accordance with their commander's plans for guarding the Race during poor visibility. Placing himself in the commander's position, he thought of several means of detecting movement through the entrance of Long Island

Sound. He hoped that the Briton was typically unimaginative, but with the past performance of the *Cerberus,* he was certain the Briton was far and away superior to the common run of stolid Royal Navy captains. If nothing else, he felt that he had prepared his mind for any contingency, depriving the enemy of the advantage of complete surprise.

Surrendering the helm to a quartermaster, Spencer walked past the port guns, stopping here and there for a word of encouragement, so that the men would not observe any anxiety in him. He joined Malloy beside the bow capstan.

"They haven't heard us, sir," Malloy whispered, more to reassure himself than to state a fact.

Spencer gestured impatiently for silence. He could almost distinguish complete sentences in which the British discussed their plight. Their language was salty and ill-adapted to civilian life ashore, and Spencer was ill disposed to be jocular. He did not mind the boats, but he was apprehensive about the possibility of having misjudged the frigate's position.

Stripped of the better part of her sailing power, the *Sarah* began to rock with the choppy seas spilling through the Race. As nearly as he could estimate, the talkative boatcrew was off the starboard bow. If true, his original surmise about the location of the *Cerberus* stood a good chance of being right. Half-thankful for the fog and night which cloaked the *Sarah* and half-angry that he could not look off the port hand to find the *Cerberus* snug in the lee of Fisher's Island, he decided to assume that the boat was to starboard. He couldn't be positive, but he could not delay; the *Sarah* was too close to the currents of the Race.

"Quietly, now," he said to Malloy, "lay aloft and set all sail. We'll run for it."

Grateful for the release from suspense, Malloy ran to gather up his topmen, while Bart nonchalantly returned to the helm. Making sail left the guns undermanned, so that Spencer would have only one broadside for use in an emergency, but speed as always was a merchantman's greatest security. Kingspoke firmly in his palm, he watched his nimble seamen crawl out along the *Sarah's* yards. As their experienced fingers found and unbent knots, sails bellied with the stiff wind. Deckhands braced the yards, and the ship slowly accelerated.

"Soundings!" he bawled, fully aware that his shout betrayed the *Sarah* to her enemies. Almost instantly, he heard the splash of lead, and in the moments before the first report perceived that the British voices had hushed. He grinned tightly as he imagined the anxious looks on the rough, ruddy faces of the astounded British boatcrew.

"By the dip four!" cried a leadsman, and hard upon the heels of his voice came a pair of musket shots in quick succession.

THE shots seemed closer at hand than Spencer had expected, but the *Sarah* had drifted to starboard, and his course through the Race would take her away from the boat. In the silence that followed, he heard a furious clatter of sweeps, as the British attempted to bear down on him. However, by this time he had more or less forgotten the boat, for the *Sarah* would have speeded up to more than ten knots when she left the rough water of the Race.

He was startled, then, when a red flare abruptly burst into the fog close aboard. Ahead, within the Race, another light replied dimly. "The fools!" gritted the second mate contemptuously. "Shall I douse that light, sir?"

"No!" Bart snapped, staring off to port. "Don't you understand?" It had been instantly clear to him. The boats were merely points of aim for the *Cerberus,* which silently scrutinized the gloom. Her guns were laid on the first red light, and Spencer knew that as the loom of the *Sarah* began to blot it out, a broadside of heavy metal would flash through the fog. The method was starkly simple, because accuracy was ensured, thus leaving only range to be dealt with, and for that the frigate could set her quoins to ladder her shot across the target. One hit could be enough, for her heavy guns could drive iron through more than two feet of solid wood at a half-mile, probably passing cleanly through the hull of the average Yankee merchantman.

As Spencer had foreseen, the haze flickered luminously to port. With the broadside's rumble across the water, shot crashed into the water, struck the *Sarah*

several shuddering blows, ripped away a snaking on the forestay and crashed into the water on the starboard side. He fumed as the red light marking the boat ahead fell slowly aft on his lee bow. He was impotent. The *Sarah* had received only one of the broadsides the British intended for her, and the second could be fatal. He glanced aloft. The sails were rounded by the wind, and only chance could speed the *Sarah* away from danger.

He looked off to port. There was nothing he could do about the frigate. He had no red lights to trap her, and the flash of her broadside had been so diffused as to be useless as a target point. He looked over his shoulder. The first red light had fallen well astern despite its crew's best efforts to overtake the fleet Yankee. Bart grinned. The British commander was doubtless enjoying the success of his little scheme, so reasonable and so inescapable. Off in the security of the mists, the British were no doubt congratulating themselves.

"Well, Mr. Tarrant," Bart said to his mate, "shall we upset their plan?"

Still exploring the possibilities of the frigate's cunning, Tarrant had nothing to say. Bart eased the wheel to starboard until he had lined up his masts on the second red light, knowing that its officer would be zealous in getting as close as possible to the *Cerberus* and yet hold the southern boundary of the Race. He had meant to steer a safe course down mid-channel, but necessity was the mother of desperation, and Spencer steered towards the slowly brightening flare, even more rapidly as the *Sarah* gathered way. At best, he counted on three minutes to run down the boat, more than ample time for the *Cerberus* to reload, and he did not intend to be hit again.

Malloy sent a messenger to inform him that he had made an inspection with the carpenter who was now busy plugging holes in the ship's sides, which were fortunately above water, although one shot had narrowly missed being a death warrant. When the *Sarah* pitched in the Race, Spencer knew she would ship water, and ordered the port watch to man the pumps.

"We won't need the guns," he said, by way of explanation to Tarrant, who was respectfully puzzled. "Watch."

Ahead, the flare went out, to be instantly replaced by another. Bart cocked an ear to the soundings. Unless he was completely mistaken this night, the boat had indeed hauled in its anchor to move closer on its compass course into the Race. An alert officer would do that much for his captain, though an older officer would have remained where stationed, and the devil with the fog and the night.

Sure of his location, Spencer demanded absolute silence. Blinded by their flare, the British would not see the *Sarah* until her bows smashed them to bits. Bart pitted his knowledge of those waters against an eager midshipman's desire for promotion to lieutenant and release from such assignments as all-night boat duty.

The flare burned brighter and brighter until Spencer was almost dazzled. Grimly, he kept the masts in line. Collision became a matter of seconds. He thought happily of the double pleasure of outwitting the British and sending a boatload of them to their deaths.

He was bracing himself for the slight jar which would shiver the *Sarah's* three hundred tons, when, almost by itself, the wheel swung violently under his hands, risking the Sarah's hull and sticks in a frantic lunge to starboard. Then, again as violently when the ship had begun to respond to the rudder, his hands reversed the wheel. The *Sarah* wriggled about the frail boat. Bart's life at sea had made it impossible for him to throw even brutal men into wintry waters when they had no hope of rescue.

He cursed his instinct when almost in his face the flare sped by to port, and his stomach cringed from the moment the *Sarah* would grind into the rocks, but a sailor's God rewarded the seamanlike act which had kept him from the murder of helpless men, and the *Sarah* burst out of the Race, free of the British blockade.

There was no parting broadside from the frigate's gunners, who tensely watched for a dim halo of red to be obscured by a fleeing Yankee. They waited throughout a whole watch, springs on cables ready to swing her side in any direction, until a furious captain sent out his own gig to learn what had happened. It was dawn before the gig returned, and the captain had already seen only his pair of picket boats and the turbulent Race. He swore briefly, and dismissed his crew from their stations.

High up in New London Light, Mr. Bates, chief clerk of Spencer & Son, carefully closed his treasured spyglass, rubbed a gaunt eye, shook a gnarled, victorious fist at the *Cerberus,* and painfully made his way down the steps to the horse which faithfully awaited him.

CHAPTER II

PRIZE OF WAR

BART SPENCER was pleased. He had eluded the *Cerberus* frigate, his carpenter had repaired the damage to the *Sarah,* the new men in the crew were cheerfully carrying out their duties, the *Sarah* had missed storms to make a quick winter passage, and now, in the latitude of Ushant, she had stumbled onto a brig which insisted upon being pugnacious.

"What do you make of her?" he asked Tarrant.

Tarrant was a small, sturdy youngster whom Bart intended one day to make a captain. Tarrant was basically cautious yet firm, and Bart admired those qualities when his property was concerned. Let Tarrant work a few quick judgments characteristic of youth out of his system, and he would be ready. Unaware of the fact that his captain was paying any particular attention to his answer, Tarrant nonetheless thought a moment. "He wants a fight," he said, after a reassuring squint at the brig against the horizon.

Spencer smiled to himself. The past hour had made that judgment conclusively evident. While the *Sarah* sailed straight on her course, the strange brig had persisted in pointing a bowsprit at them. This procedure, given a slight superiority in speed, would ultimately bring the brig within hail. For his part, Bart had cooperated by taking enough reefs in his canvas to let the brig's bearing increase; thus, in time, if the brig was unfriendly, they could have an argument.

"What would you do," Bart asked offhandedly, "if she was the *Cerberus?*"

Tarrant had to digest that before replying. Sooner or later every American captain had to face the same situation, and usually got the wrong answer. "I don't know," he said.

Spencer chuckled. "Good lad. Why?"

"Because," Tarrant explained, working on the problem, "she has the wind and the guns. If I ran, wind on quarter, she might catch me, particularly if the sea kicked up. The only chance I see would be to try to take the wind from her."

Bart looked down at his mate. Tarrant's proposal was bold, but it was sounder than mere flight. In a close-hauled struggle, where full-rigged ships scarcely crawled, success would go to the better built and better handled vessel, and the good lines of the *Sarah* would give her an immediate advantage over a squat, clumsy hull made by British hands. "We'll put our strategy to the test," he said. "The brig will sail closer to the wind than we, but we'll take care of that." Unaccountably, Tarrant's honest face showed a flicker of shock. "But Captain," he objected quietly, "why put it to the test when there's no need? All morning, until you shortened sail, she fell aft. We have the heels of her now."

Bart frowned at the presumption probably produced by the friendliness with which he had precipitated the discussion, but Malloy came up to relieve the watch, so he said nothing. Somewhat reluctantly, Tarrant gave the necessary data, while Malloy displayed a nonchalance which reflected an innate confidence in the *Sarah's* ability to handle such an antagonist.

"Eat well, Mr. Tarrant," Bart advised, as that officer prepared to go below. "You may not have a hot supper."

"Yes, sir," Tarrant replied abstractedly, and went down the hatch.

Malloy thoughtfully followed him with his eyes. "You know, Captain," he said conversationally, " I wouldn't be surprised if we lose the lad to the Navy."

"What?" Spencer demanded sharply.

Malloy repeated his statement, and the captain scowled. The notion would never have occurred to him, particularly after Tarrant's distress over the promise to outmaneuver the brig. "Why does everyone talk about the Navy?" he asked.

The first mate shifted uneasily, wishing he could recall his spontaneous remark. "Well, Captain," he said casually, "he's still young, you know, and all that talk at home must have had some effect on him."

Bart stared at his friend for a long moment, then silently looked away to the brig. He knew what Malloy was referring

to. All the talk about the shortages of manpower, materials, food, money, as the Colonies neared the end of the third year in their struggle to become independent of England. He knew very well. The Connecticut Navy had offered him a captain's commission and the simpleton's task of sailing to the West Indies for stores from St. Eustatius or loads of sulphur to be used in the infant gunpowder industry. The only inducement was the empty reward of glory, and Spencer preferred something more tangible which could back up a negotiable letter of credit.

"When the crew has finished dining," he said, after a time, "run out the guns."

"Aye aye, sir," Malloy replied, thankful the previous subject was thereby closed. He knew how Spencer felt about the insistent propaganda waged against men of wealth or men of youth, and understood that the impact of town criticism struck his captain twice as hard as a man who was young but poor. Sooner or later, Malloy intended to apply to the Congress for a commission, but first he wanted to secure a nest egg which could make him his own master after the war. Spencer & Son paid better than any other firm in the Colony, however, and Malloy was vague as to the date when he would exchange that pay for the pittance of a Continental officer. He gave his captain credit for the same sentiments.

WITH a final calculating look at the brig, Bart went below to the cabin. Although he had not said so, he wished Malloy had been more careful with his tongue. Mention of the Navy had put Sarah into his mind, and Bart wanted her to remain back in New London where she belonged until he had time to straighten her out. He had long since regretted leaving her in anger, but he had not as yet found a reply to her charges that he could present to her with any degree of equanimity. Sarah had the weight of public opinion on her side, for as a community which lived by the sea, the folk of New London resented the British blockade. It wasn't only zealous hotheads who wanted to be quit of King George; there were plenty of older, cooler heads besides.

His steward brought in his lunch and as quickly as Spencer had begun to think about the problem of America's duty in 1778, he forgot it, turning to the food with such enthusiasm he was able to regain the quarterdeck before any of the relieved watch.

The situation had changed little. The brig had crept ahead perhaps a half-mile. Malloy was casually shooting the sun with his quadrant. Bart waited patiently for his mate to flip through the pages of Moore to work out his sights, accepted the information that the *Sarah* was almost precisely on the latitude of Brest, and then had all hands summoned to battle stations. The day was clear and cold, and Bart wanted to know the brig's intentions. She was flying the Dutch flag, but no flag could disguise bluff British lines, and the colors did not deceive even the youngest boy who scurried from magazines to powder tub.

When the *Sarah* was ready, Bart sent for Tarrant and said to Malloy, "Heave to. No need to keep the men out in the cold any longer than we have to."

Malloy was as tall as his skipper and as fond of a fight, yet he was a practical man, and did not see the merit of unnecessarily exposing the *Sarah* to shot into her cargo. They had been lucky with the *Cerberus,* when the eighteen-pounders only smashed a few of her barrels of pitch and tar without setting any of them afire. There was no guarantee that the brig would not be luckier. Malloy didn't worry about the dressed deerskins, which would not burn without extreme heat; he feared the possibility of that heat being supplied by blazing barrels of essence of spruce. "Yes, sir," he said, conveying by his expression a complete disapproval of the whole business. "I hope they won't be too warm."

Spencer's black eyes searched the challenging blue of Malloy's. "Heave to."

"Aye, aye, sir," Malloy replied gravely.

And so, sails aback, the *Sarah* lost way until she rolled ahead at a slow pace. Spencer did not completely kill her way, for, as he explained to Tarrant, although she was to leeward and could fall off before the wind to sail large and outdistance the brig, she would need considerable time to get underway from a dead stop. There was no sense in giving an enemy such a golden opportunity.

"We have to get him on our beam before we turn into him," Spencer said.

The youngster nodded that he understood the lesson, and Bart somehow got the impression that Tarrant was less than enthusiastic about the impending maneuvers. Slightly troubled, Bart doggedly persisted in his intentions to outsail and then take the impudent Briton.

The *Sarah's* slowing down had the effect of making the brig almost spurt towards her. Moved as much by perversity as design, Bart from time to time let his sails fill away so that the brig abruptly seemed to be checked in mid-career. He was certain she was a privateer; there was no other explanation of her conduct. This was perfectly agreeable to him, what with the commission locked in his desk. Less than a day out of sight of Ushant, he would have little difficulty bringing even a badly crippled prize into port, and although France had not as yet become an ally of the Continental Congress, he did not anticipate many difficulties in disposing of a capture.

He suffered the brig to close within a mile, and then, with due regard for even the most impossible eventualities, got slowly underway to force the brig to comply with his plans. The brig struggled to come within a thousand yards and succeeded because Bart wanted her at that distance. She would come no nearer until she disclosed her identity. By judicious management of his sails, Bart maintained a range rate of zero, so that the brig was obliged at length to turn parallel to his course. At this juncture, he fired a blank gun and broke out a Connecticut flag over his taffrail. The stranger hesitated for several minutes and Bart grinned, quietly passed orders and waited.

FINALLY, to no one's surprise, the brig hauled down the Dutch colors and ran up the British, accompanying the gesture with a ragged imitation of a broadside. The shot failed to annoy the nimble *Sarah,* for, as the Dutch colors went down, Bart turned her head to windward, and had his ship swinging her jibboom well astern of the brig when the shot struck.

Closehauling on the starboard tack, Bart said to Tarrant, "Now we will see." The *Sarah* crawled towards the brig's track. However, the brig adroitly put about, willingly sacrificing some of her windward position in order to grapple. Spencer cracked on all canvas the *Sarah* would carry in order to overcome the brig's ability to sail closer to the wind, and the British captain, apparently fearing that the *Sarah* would run if she won the weather, doggedly refused to let the *Sarah* gain her objective, and thereby abandoned his hope of heaving grappling irons.

At a range shortened to little more than a quarter of a mile, the British privateer forsook his country's traditions and opened fire. Luckily for the *Sarah,* he shared his compatriots' deficiency in gunnery, and the range proved too great for him to do serious damage to the American.

Spencer refused to return the fire until the guncrews near him began to look up impatiently. A good businessman, he was thinking in terms of the brig's possible market value, and only with misgivings consented to give the order to shoot which would assuage his men's shrinking helplessly from a cannonading they were not answering.

Probably because of the gunners' surprise at being permitted to blast at a target, the *Sarah's* first salvo could just as well have been pointed at the empty sea. The six-pound shot hit nothing, and Bart could well wonder if he had foolishly spent his money in manning his ship like a naval craft. His sole satisfaction from the salvo was the surmise that the British privateer was suddenly made aware of the true facts of the matter. Bart would have enjoyed being able to see the British realize that they were not dealing with a fat merchantman handled by perhaps a dozen men, but a privateer like themselves, fully aroused and capable of decisive action.

The *Sarah's* second broadside corrected the mistakes of the first. At five hundred yards, Malloy's embarrassed gun captains managed to land a third of their shot. Then, to remove any question of these hits being due to shock, they scored four more hits in a second broadside.

With this demonstration, the brig changed its tactics. Her commander, showing good common sense, acknowledged that he had made an error in judgment, and attempted to break off action. He shifted to the port tack, shamelessly run-

ning away. Having foreseen this reaction, Bart was ready for it, but the brig was more adroit than the *Sarah,* and close-hauling, settled on her new course before Bart had done little more than shift the rudder. Having the wind and the advantage of her fore and aft sails, the handier brig should have been able to get away, even though the *Sarah,* by having to sail more than a point further away from the wind, was doomed by mathematics to gain a trifle when she crossed the brig's track.

"What should we do now, Mr. Tarrant?" Bart asked.

White-faced, Tarrant replied, "Take her, Captain."

"Excellent," Bart said. "Go to your station, sir." He had a means of ending the encounter, and bawled for staysails. The *Sarah* thus received the trifling addition to the forward thrust which enabled her by properly shortened canvas to gain the brig's heels. With great satisfaction, Bart watched his gunners loose the *Sarah's* third broadside.

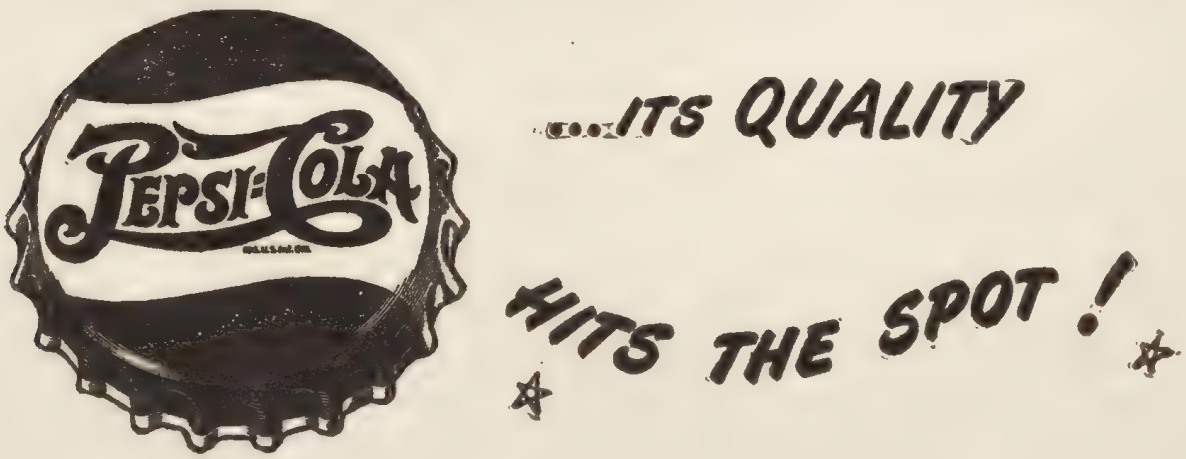
The afternoon was unfortunate for the brig. With a superior edge of speed, the *Sarah* could overbear the brig's superior handiness, tacking back and forth across the Briton's track, inexorably shortening the distance and as inexorably increasing the punishment flung out by her guns. The Briton's sole hopes were time and seamanship, and he did not have enough of either.

Long before sunset, the *Sarah* had laboriously shortened to musket range the distance where she passed astern of the brig when tacking, and Malloy's gun-crews efficiently raked the hapless British who feebly replied with a pair of stern-chasers. In all, scarcely a dozen broadsides bought the firm of Spencer & Son a new brig, for, after vainly attempting to shake free from the Yankee, the British skipper hove to and struck his flag.

HAVING from the first been confident of this outcome, Bart undemonstratively acknowledged the surrender of the brig, drawing up alongside of her to windward. Hove to, waiting for a boat to be roused out and slung into the water, he smiled at the congratulations of his officers, sent his servant for a sword to wear, and acted much as though he regretted the necessity of boarding the brig to take formal possession of her. His exterior was a triumph over his feelings. This was the first ship he had ever acquired by force, and he was as excited as the gunners who were busily trying to compute their share of prize-money. In the best traditions of the sea, he should have dispatched his first mate on the mission, but the crisp weather lent weight to his pretense that he could not ask an officer to risk himself in the elements.

"No risk at all, Captain," Malloy protested, eager to go.

Spencer met the gallant reminder of his breach of faith with marine tradition by simply ignoring the outburst. "If there is trouble," he ordered, "shoot." His brain was already busy with the necessities of satisfying a prize court of his claim, and he mentally checked over the papers he would have to confiscate to substantiate his own. The capture had been so easy, he almost suspected something was wrong.



"Let me go, Captain," Malloy insisted respectfully.

"No," replied Spencer, cold fingers fumbling with the buckle of his sword belt. "This is my first, you know."

"I know," Malloy said, squinting at the battered brig. "Shall I make preparations to take her in tow?"

Spencer nodded absently. Malloy's quiet suggestion made him realize that a prize involved responsibilities. What, for example, would he do with his British prisoners?

Tarrant slowly came up to him, young face grimly strained. Touching his forelock with just a trace of irony, he soberly reported that his midship division had lost two men to a random shot.

Bart was annoyed more by the lad's attitude than the news. He had not observed the shot's arrival, and had assumed that the *Sarah* had bloodlessly won her battle, but even so, the brig was cheaply his.

Being killed in a quiet skirmish was an occupational hazard for a Yankee seaman, and he could have shrugged off the presence of death were it not for Tarrant's manifest concern. He studied the lad keenly, and Tarrant looked up at him with a boldness Spencer would never have expected.

"Take care of them!" he snapped.

Tarrant again touched his forelock, and spun about on a heel.

"Too bad," Malloy remarked matter-of-factly. "It was Fletcher and Hoskins, Captain."

Bart lost his temper. "Later, Mr. Malloy, if you please."

"Aye aye, sir," the first mate replied, much like his comrade. "The boat's ready, Captain."

Angrily, Spencer took his bulk over the side. The conquest of the brig had suddenly, inexplicably become bitter to his taste, and if he had the power, he would have willingly undone the day's work. He did not know why he should feel a sense of guilt, but Tarrant's face dogged his thoughts until his coxswain coughed and said, "A hand up, Captain?" Spencer recovered himself to find the boat pitching alongside the brig. "No!" he almost shouted, stood up, and lunged for the brig's ladder, while his seamen fumingly fended off the boat.

THE brig's deck was worse than he had anticipated. The *Sarah's* shot had knocked the flimsy cockleshell about until at first glance Spencer was far from sure that the brig was worth salvaging. Sullen faces scowled at him. Defeat set hard with British seamen, long used to being dominant on the seas, and as he strode towards the helm, he half-expected to receive a belaying pin at the base of his skull.

The brig's discomfited commander waited by the quarterdeck hatch, honest cutlass held sheathed for surrender. He was of medium height, erect, spare, and preserved by salt a youthful appearance into middle age. "My sword, sir," he said gravely.

"Keep it," Spencer replied impulsively. "Let's go below."

Somewhat astounded by generosity from an uncouth, hulking rebel, the Englishman made a leg, and then led the way to his cabin. Cursing the parsimony which induced the average shipwright to construct overheads too close to decks to accommodate a sailor of decent parts, Spencer stooped his way along the short passageway into the cabin. There, breath frosting in the chill admitted by a splinter-edged hole in the transom, Spencer found a chair into which he dropped heavily while the Briton silently gathered up his ship's papers.

Also silently, Spencer accepted the log book, learned that his prize was *The Fair Sister* out of Tynemouth, Martin Brown, Master, commissioned letter-of-marque by their Lords of the Admiralty, to cruise against any and all of the several enemies of the British crown. With a practiced eye, he absorbed the data on the first few pages, then impatiently began to flip through the remainder of the book, which contained matters of interest only to *The Fair Sister's* former owners.

"Where," he demanded, "is an abstract of your manifest?"

"Manifest?" Captain Brown was surprised. "We carry no cargo, sir."

Bart stared incredulously. "No cargo?" he echoed.

"None, sir," Captain Brown assured him.

"Damnation!" Bart exclaimed. His effort had gone for little more than nothing. Half-hoping Brown was lying, he grimly

The conquest of the brig had suddenly become bitter to his taste . . . He would have willingly undone the day's work.

examined the other papers, looked once more through the log, and reluctantly yielded to the truth. His little lesson to Tarrant had gone completely awry. "Well," he commented bitterly, rising, "it is at least a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Captain."

"I do not espouse the same sentiment, sir," Brown retorted truthfully, "even though some might think it no disgrace for a privateer to be overwhelmed by a sloop-of-war, I cannot find solace in being undone by a naval officer who in more loyal days would have served our common sovereign."

"That is just as well, then, Captain,"

Spencer said carefully, "because you have been undone by a merchant like yourself."

The revelation was obviously repugnant to Brown's vanity, and Spencer had a moment of triumph which passed quickly when he realized that the self-assured, complacent Briton would probably never again possess quite as much self-assurance or complacency.

"Come, sir," he said roughly. "Show me the ship."

"As you wish," Brown replied, and bitterly led the way topside.

Stoically, Bart surveyed the damage wrought by the *Sarah's* guns. Often enough, he had exercised his crews with empty casks for targets, but this was the first evidence he had ever seen intimately of the effects of good gunnery. *The Fair Sister* had nine killed and more than a score wounded, and was herself mangled almost past repair.

Bart estimated, after some thought, that the task of rerigging would alone be almost as expensive as the original job, while repairs to bulwarks and strakes were in the unknown realm of carpentry costs. The more he saw of his prize, the less he cared for the legal complications she was going to involve.

Had the brig but carried a cargo, almost any cargo, even salt, he would have been more spirited when he returned to the *Sarah.*

The sun was setting when he again set foot on his own quarterdeck, where two man-sized canvas bundles lay snugly lashed with line near the helm. He averted his gaze, while waiting for Malloy to finish arrangements for towing. Then he turned to the first mate and said, "Put Tarrant aboard her."

Since a first mate ordinarily had the privilege of taking a prize into port, Malloy hesitated, started to say something, and did as he was ordered. Bart did not explain that for some odd reason he wished to have Tarrant absent when Fletcher and Hoskins went for the last time over the side.

Thus, the *Sarah* dragged her trophy at the end of a cable past Pointe St. Mathieu and Fort Espagnole into the harbor of Brest, narrowly avoiding a tempest which suddenly raged up out of the Bay of Biscay.

CHAPTER III

THE LITTLE CAPTAIN

BART stood at the stern windows of his cabin thoughtfully looking over at the beaten hull of *The Fair Sister* silhouetted against the city of Brest. Hands behind his back, he watched Tarrant busily directing a group of seamen in the rerigging of the foremast shrouds, but he was not preoccupied with Tarrant's progress on the job. He was merely taking a brief rest from the problems presented by the papers which were scattered about on his desk.

At one time, prior to his meeting with *The Fair Sister,* he had considered the career of a privateer as a lazy, carefree existence. He had refrained from privateering primarily because he preferred the steady income he derived from regular trade to the gamble of taking a rich prize. Despite the popularity which the practice enjoyed among the maritime element of the Colonies, Bart was content with the triangular voyages which swelled the profits of Spencer & Son. Every time his ships went out, he was sure they would return with goods and money, whereas more often than not, the backers of a privateer got nothing for their interest except the negative gratification of knowing their vessel had not fallen victim to one of the ever-increasing number of British cruisers.

And now Spencer had learned that there was more to the matter of disposing of a prize than he had ever calculated. Accustomed to a short inspection by the French customs, he had been stunned by presentation of a host of forms to be filled out before he could even go with the French to *The Fair Sister.* That had happened yesterday, and he still had not completed the papers. Until he had settled the business of the prize, the French stubbornly refused to treat him as a merchantman.

"You are now a privateer, Monsieur," the inspector had said, after having accepted the package of articles Bart had gotten into the habit of bringing him. "Later we will discuss the duty."

Bart seethed. He had a right to consider the Frenchman an old friend, and therefore asked a blunt question: "Are we allies or are we not?"

The inspector winked. "Officially, Monsieur: no. Unofficially—" He spread his hands and winked again. "There are rumors of an alliance, but we have as yet no orders."

Bart, too, had heard of the rumors. Saratoga had done that. The French King was persuaded that Colonists who could capture a British Army would make worthy allies. He had not, however, referred to that; he had meant all the years of the war when a French port had afforded sympathetic haven to an American merchantman. Indeed, even now the French at Brest were giving shelter to a ship flying the Grand Union flag of the Continental Navy. If they tolerated a Yankee man-of-war, why were they so strict with an old customer?

He felt discriminated against.

Someone rapped on the frame of his door. "Come in!" he snapped, without turning around.

It was Malloy, followed by a small, well proportioned officer who proudly bore the uniform of the tiny Continental Navy. "The captain of the *Ranger,* sir," Malloy said, and withdrew.

Thankful of a legitimate excuse to postpone his paperwork, Bart gestured to a chair. "Pray be seated, Captain. I presume that is your command over there?"

"It is, sir," replied the officer, "and not as well found as yours."

Bart smiled. Every skipper believes his ship is the best, and instantly likes anyone who has the perspicacity to understand that fact. "What can I do for you, Captain?" he asked, sitting down to his desk, and reaching for a bottle of good New England rum.

"First, sir, permit me to congratulate you upon your prize. I heard the details from your friend, the inspector. We are both impressed."

"Thank you," Bart replied. "Now, again, how can I serve you?"

"Ah," laughed the little captain. "I come for mutual advantage. I can do something for you, and you for me. First," he said, drawing an envelope from his pocket, "the matter in which I can assist you. You are in difficulties as a merchantman because you have turned privateer without making proper arrangement for disposal of prizes. Very well. This is a letter to my agents, Gourlade & Moylan, an established American firm at Nantes. I am certain they will relieve you of your problems in connection with *The Fair Sister,* should you honor me with permission to post this letter to them."

BART perused the scrawl and attempted to mask the elation which the offer had aroused in him. *The Fair Sister* had proved to be far more trouble to him than her worth, and he was anxious to be quit of her. Still, his native caution warned him to beware of Greeks bearing gifts. Putting himself in the boots of a businessman established in Nantes, he was willing to believe that the letter was persuasive enough to induce Gourlade & Moylan to take over the brig, and he would give them his blessing. But, he wondered, but what did the *Ranger's* captain hope to gain by this altruism?

"Yes?" he said.

The *Ranger's* captain threw a bombshell. "You have ninety-three prisoners," he said calmly. "I want them."

Bart frowned incredulously. The prisoners, next to *The Fair Sister* herself, had been his biggest worry. He had been entirely nonplussed by the matter of dealing with them, and reached the reluctant conclusion that he would have to take them back to New London with him. Calculation of the cost in food alone had discouraged him, to say nothing of the wasted storage space and the inconveniences of guarding them. "You want the prisoners?" he murmured. "Why?"

Observing that his offer had been tacitly accepted with bewilderment, the Continental captain declined a mug of rum, and explained himself. "Sir," he said seriously, "I have two purposes in this cruise. First, to injure England as much as may be within my power, and second, to improve the lot of the poor wretches who have fallen into their hands." He gazed out the stern window. "Have you ever seen a released American seaman?"

Bart slowly shook his head.

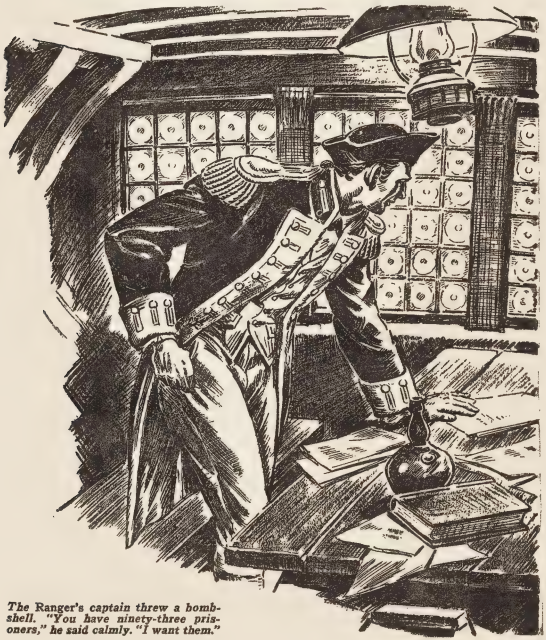
"They are not well treated, sir," the captain said simply. "They are not accorded the same status of prisoner of war granted to our soldiers, but then General Washington has been able to capture numbers of *their* troops, whereas we have taken very few of their seamen. I hope

that enough of their seamen in our hands will prove an inducement for them to better their treatment of ours."

Bart felt drawn closer to the war than ever before. "By all means, Captain," he said earnestly, "take them."

"Thank you, sir." The Continental officer smiled. "Let us draw up the necessary documents for their transfer to my charge."

Thus, some two hours later, Bart was relieved of his captives, and the way was cleared for him to become again a man of business. In elation, he sent for Malloy, both to invite him to supper and to discuss the matter of disposing of their cargo and the purchase of another. Malloy came as the Continental captain departed, standing aside to let the little man pass.



The Ranger's captain threw a bombshell. "You have ninety-three prisoners," he said calmly. "I want them."

"You seem pleased," Malloy remarked.

"I am indeed!" Bart said, and explained the afternoon's transactions.

Malloy listened attentively to the end, and then announced dryly, "I'm sorry to have some bad news to spoil the good. Chips located that shot from the *Cerberus* we couldn't find in the hold. It's in the mainmast."

"That's fine!" Spencer said sarcastically. "So we unstep the mast!"

"I'm afraid so, Captain," Malloy replied apologetically.

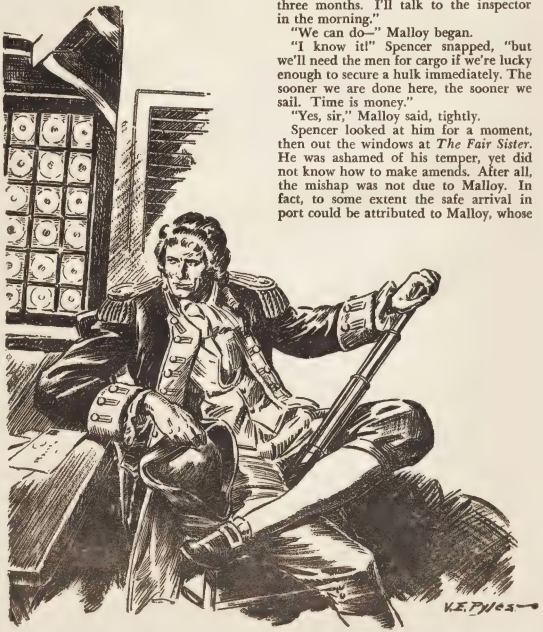
Spencer sat back in his chair, visualizing all the time-swallowing work which was involved, presupposing that he could obtain the services of a hulk to lift out the mast. On a smaller vessel, he could have rigged sheerlegs and be damned to assistance from the beach, but the *Sarah* was large enough to demand the services of a hulk. "Well," he said wearily, "that will take us anywhere from a week to three months. I'll talk to the inspector in the morning."

"We can do—" Malloy began.

"I know it!" Spencer snapped, "but we'll need the men for cargo if we're lucky enough to secure a hulk immediately. The sooner we are done here, the sooner we sail. Time is money."

"Yes, sir," Malloy said, tightly.

Spencer looked at him for a moment, then out the windows at *The Fair Sister*. He was ashamed of his temper, yet did not know how to make amends. After all, the mishap was not due to Malloy. In fact, to some extent the safe arrival in port could be attributed to Malloy, whose



skill extracted the maximum from sail and mast with the minimum of strain. A rougher mate might have made the wounded mast carry away. Nor was Malloy to be blamed for not discovering the trouble sooner. Cargo packed tightly into the *Sarah's* hold could not be shifted at sea without possible mischance, and he was to be commended for his enterprise in clearing a way into the hold for inspection while the *Sarah* was held up by customs. Even though the weather deck was now littered with barrels, Spencer had a gain in time by knowing what had to be done.

"Here," he said, turning to pick up the papers left by the captain of the *Ranger,* "enter this in the log."

Malloy took the papers and glanced at them. From his time in the service of Spencer & Son, he understood that Bart was roughly apologizing. "Aye aye, sir," he said, absently, while his eyes darted about the receipt for the *Sarah's* prisoners. "The fellow's name is Jones."

"That's correct," Bart said, taking pen in hand to compute his customs duties on the rates current in Brest, "John Paul Jones. He's welcome to them."

Malloy left to make his entry in the log.

CHAPTER IV

PATRIOT AND PRIVATEER

THE *Sarah* heeled steadily on her course, south southeast, her hold burdened with commonplace articles greatly wanted in the French West Indies. Her dry goods, tallow candles, furniture, saddles and shoes would be disposed of in a twinkling, freeing her for the homeward voyage.

She was long overdue, having been delayed for three months at Brest, despite the best efforts of her master to get her cleared. John Paul Jones notwithstanding, the French had taken their own time about permitting Gourlade & Moylan to proceed against *The Fair Sister* as a prize, and in the interim had declined to render hulk or lightering services. Malloy had a new mast stepped before the cargo ever went ashore. That was the oddest part of all the bureaucratic inefficiency—for the Arsenal of Brest, refitting ships-of-the-line for the war with England which was on everyone's lips, desperately needed even the driblet of naval stores which the *Sarah* had brought to Europe. Indeed, while Malloy and his seamen swore under a May sun to rerig the new mainmast, M. le Comte d'Estaing sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar with eleven ships, bound for New York and active French participation in the war.

By June, when the requirements of French officialdom had been satisfied, John Paul Jones had long since made his name and that of the *Ranger* known in the Irish Sea, and the frigate *Belle-Poule* of Lieutenant Chadeau de la Clocheterie had fought a sharp action with the British *Arethusa* off Ushant and returned triumphantly to Brest. War had not yet been declared, when the *Sarah* finally discharged her cargo and laid in another, yet her crew felt they had a share in the glory of the *Ranger,* for Tarrant was aboard her as an able-bodied seaman.

Perhaps because of his difficulties with the French regulations, Spencer was less than enthusiastic about the day when Tarrant had quietly come up to him and asked to be taken off the books. "It is against my policy to discharge a man in a foreign port," Spencer had told him. Tarrant was insistent, and in the end offered to sign a quitclaim for his pay and his share in the proceeds of *The Fair Sister.*

This, of course, had shaken Spencer, and he let Tarrant go, convinced that a person who spurned money had sufficiently strong motives for deserting if need be, and being fond of the lad he did not want to drive him to that unforgivable act. Tarrant thereupon explained that he was going to enlist in the Continental Navy to serve aboard the *Ranger,* whose captain he had come to admire during the transactions involved in the transfer of *The Fair Sister.*

"Why?" Bart had asked curiously. "Why join the *Ranger* if Jones can't give you a commission?"

"Sir," young Tarrant had answered, looking him in the eye, "if I'm going to fight, it will be for a cause, not personal gain."

Nonplussed, Bart had permitted the youngster to shift to the *Ranger* without another word. Although the ingenuous Tarrant had probably never intended to

John Paul Jones

preach a sermon, his decision and conduct had made a deep impression on Bart which was not wholly effaced by the work of bickering with French merchants for their wares. Ordinarily, Bart relished the game of pitting his Yankee shrewdness against French thriftiness, but the pleasure of estimating the gain from the different goods offered for sale was no longer sweet. He even made a poor bargain or two which was going to scandalize Bates when the books were finally cast up for the voyage.

In July, when the *Sarah* at last catted and fished her anchors, spread her sails, and dropped out the roads past Pointe Espagnole, Bart half-wished he could have sailed directly to New London instead of making the leg to the West Indies. He was thoroughly sick of the French and their fumbling cooperation, even though they were now openly on the side of the Continental Congress.

Hatted against the sun, clad only in shirt and trousers, he idly roamed his ship and tried to confine his thoughts to her operation. Had he been a watch officer, he might have achieved this tranquillity, but Malloy had strongly recommended one of his quartermasters for promotion to acting mate, and to support Malloy's reputation, Bart had felt obliged to give the fellow a chance at Tarrant's berth. Thus there were still three mates to stand four hours on and eight hours off watch, even though Bart had avoided his thoughts for a week by hopefully standing watches with the quartermaster in secret hopes he would prove incompetent. The week's test had established the justice of confirming the quartermaster's promotion to mate, and Bart resignedly returned to the cabin.

For a few days, he diverted himself with the accounting necessitated by his business transactions, but this only took the *Sarah* to the latitude of Madeira and the shift in course for the stretch across the Atlantic to the Indies, nearly a month in which Bart had ample time to think.

It was involuntary, yet unavoidable unless he wanted to shut himself up in his cabin for the remainder of the voyage. On deck, he was reminded by the quartermaster's new glory of Tarrant's absence. Tarrant's absence put him in mind of the capable little figure of John Paul Jones. Jones forced him to think of the Continental Navy, and the Navy made him think of Sarah Turnbull. It was a cycle without escape.

ONCE he had believed in himself and the validity of his conclusions, as a strong man always faces his world with confidence. He had decided to use the Revolution for his own advantage. Set in this decision, he had serenely ignored the pressures at home, applied his knowledge and reason to the problem of surviving against the ring thrown about the Colonies by the Royal Navy, and had prospered while less self-reliant men had fallen victim either to mass hysteria or their own emotions. From the first, he had prepared for, but scrupulously avoided fighting, bypassing every sail which broke the horizon until he had been tempted by *The Fair Sister.*

Now he began to question his decision to remain apart from his fellow-Colonists' struggle. From the patriotism of Sarah to the almost impersonal humanity of Jones and the self-sacrifice of Tarrant, there ranged a variety of courses for him to fol-

low. He decided at last to discuss the matter with Malloy, who had a cool head and clear vision.

After Malloy had a good supper inside him and a cigar glowing, Spencer tactfully said, "I'm puzzled."

Malloy pulled on his cigar, and murmured affably, "Puzzled about what, Captain?"

"The war," Bart said. "What difference will the French make?"

"Well," Malloy replied slowly, "they may win the war for us."

Spencer took a drink of Bordeaux, which, to his New England palate, was a serviceable substitute for water. "I hope so," he said. "I'm just wondering why they jumped into the war."

Malloy gave him a keen look. "They want their colonies back, obviously."

"Obviously," Bart agreed. Indeed, only a fool would have thought King Louis and his ministers were prompted by sheer altruism. "Why did they wait this long?"

Malloy shrugged indifferently. The motives of the French leaders were less interesting to him than the fact that he had the midwatch.

"I think I know," Bart said. "I wonder if you will agree. I think they waited until their Navy was rebuilt to the point where they could take on the British and win. They had some fine ships there in Brest."

Malloy nodded, waiting.

"That's all," Bart said testily. "I think they waited until their Navy was ready."

"A good point," Malloy said hastily, aware of his slowness in acknowledging his captain's analysis of international affairs.

"Well, do you agree?"

"Certainly. But I don't think they will win."

"Oh?" Bart said. "Why not?"

"The British are too good."

Bart was silent, disappointed in the outcome of this prelude to the matter which was really uppermost in his mind. After a time, he said, "If they can not defeat the British at sea, what are we to do?"

Malloy put down his cigar. "Captain," he said slowly, "Tarrant's right. We've got to fight them ourselves. We can't beat them at sea, but we can on land. We've got to."

"Why?" Bart asked quietly.

Malloy laughed, stretching his long body back in his chair. "I suspected that was it," he remarked good-naturedly. "Well, just look at it this way: what will happen to you and your business if the British are successful in putting down the Rebellion?"

"Why did the Rebellion start?" Bart asked, unrebuffed. "I don't understand it."

Malloy stopped laughing. "I'm not so sure I do either," he admitted. "I can't honestly say that King George ever oppressed me."

"Connecticut takes a damned sight more out of profits than King George ever did," Bart said wryly. "You're right about what would happen if we lose. I'd just like to know how we ever got into the kettle in the first place."

"Listen," Malloy suggested, "twenty years from now you can go down to Yale and find out. They'll have the answer then."

"I want it now," Bart said.

Malloy shook his head. "You have to feel it, I suppose. Tarrant did. So did that captain from the *Ranger*."

Bart was thinking of Mistress Sarah Turnbull. "I don't want to go into a Navy," he said meditatively. "We don't have any ships big enough to do any good. And yet, if I fight, it should be at sea, where I have some knowledge of what I am doing."

He paused to let Malloy pick up the train of thought. "The entry of the French Navy should make it much safer for privateering, Captain."

"Exactly," Bart smiled. "Surely that would be honorable."

"Surely," Malloy echoed, with a faint hint of mockery. "But they won't all be like *The Fair Sister*."

"What do you mean?" Bart asked sharply.

"Just that, Captain," Malloy said mildly. "Nothing more."

Bart considered the remark for a moment. "Well," he said, "I wanted you to know of my decision to begin privateering after this voyage. Will you sail with me?"

"Let us reach home first, Captain, and I will let you know," Malloy answered coolly, and would not commit himself any further.

CHAPTER V

A LESSON IN GUNNERY

IF Bart thought that his first mate was exercising too much Yankee caution, he discovered when running down the latitude of Martinique that the *Sarah* was indeed far from home. Some four days out of port, he was brought on deck by the report of a sail dead ahead. In the past, he had always given such strangers a wide berth, but he was now set upon privateering, and took this opportunity.

"Steady," he said to the helm. Malloy was the only soul aboard who wasn't startled when the word was passed to prepare for action. Here and there a seaman growled mutinously to a mate; *The Fair Sister* had been a disappointment to them and they were less than enthusiastic about another action which might bring them death and only a pound or two of prize money. Still, no one grumbled openly, for Bart Spencer was master of his ship.

"What do you make of her?" he asked Malloy, when the strange ship was hull down.

Malloy shrugged. The stranger was a full-rigged ship and only time would tell more. At least they had the wind and could start an engagement on favorable terms.

"Sail ho!" shrilled the masthead lookout.

Bart frowned as he looked off his starboard beam. There, barely peeping above the horizon, the topgallants of a second ship bore down on the *Sarah*. At once his belligerency evaporated. "Down helm!" he ordered.

He saw little profit in walking into a situation which would possibly involve the *Sarah* with two foes.

With the wind on her quarter, the *Sarah* ran her swiftest on a course which drove her towards the British stronghold of Barbados. Abandoning the batteries, Bart set his crew to rigging stunsails, pulling the last possible amount of propulsion from the wind. While topmen fumbled with the yards and eyes, he set the compass sights on the ship to the north, which had the wind. To his mortification, the bearing held steady even when the stunsails were drawing. With infinite care, he braced to the wind until certain the *Sarah* could sail no faster in a moderate sea and wind.

The ship which had been to the west shifted course to intercept the *Sarah*, but Bart calculated that she could not head them off even with a two-knot superiority in speed before the night dropped a screen of deception upon the ocean. There would be sufficient starlight to see the horizon, but insufficient visibility for accurate plotting, and he hoped in the night to outmaneuver both strangers. In a straight chase he was willing to pit the *Sarah* against any ship.

Steadily, the ship to the west bore down towards the *Sarah's* bow, but just as steadily the sun marched inexorably over the Caribbean to the Pacific. The ship to the north hung stationary, neither gaining nor losing in the chase. This indication of equal speed surprised Bart somewhat, yet he was unruffled. The night would rectify all things, and he had one good advantage: they wanted to catch him, and therefore were dependent upon his movements for theirs.

The clear light of day dimmed and the *Sarah* was still safe. Standing on his quarterdeck, wheel in his own hands, Bart sent the watch below. Malloy refused to leave his running plot even for a hot meal, and Bart did not try to force him to do so, even though the continued presence topside of captain and first mate brought home to the crew the realization that they had cause for alarm.

The western sky grew gold and night crept up the east. Malloy casually shot his sights as the brighter stars winked clear with the planets. And then the gold fused into crimson and yellow which was pressed down by deepening blue and Malloy swore as his mirror brought a western star down from the heavens to rest on the western ship instead of the horizon. The *Sarah* was less than three miles from interception.

Bart shifted to the course of the western ship. "Watch the bearing," he ordered, as he steadied parallel to their closest pursuer.

Thus, while the starlight took over the sky from the sun, the pair of ships raced almost due south, until after half an hour, Malloy was able to announce that the *Sarah* certainly was the faster.

SHIRT open at the throat, big hands clamped onto the helm, Bart grimly set his plan of action into motion. He could have sailed large on the same course, but if the chase lasted for days, he might stumble into some of the squadron based on Barbados. By going west, the *Sarah* drew near the friendly ports of the French islands. He had everything to gain by boldness, and everything to lose by timidity.

He put the *Sarah* on the starboard tack, where she took the wind for her best speed, but headed directly for the western ship. Bart put the northern stranger out of his mind.

"Stand by your guns," he said quietly to Malloy.

Somewhat confused by the sudden stabbing lunge, the stranger shortened sail, turned onto the starboard tack, and waited for developments, which was precisely what Bart had wanted. Once the stranger had shortened sail and slacked way, Bart shifted to the port tack again, and drove again for Barbados.

Hastily, the stranger loosed sail, shifted her helm, and found herself unable to get underway quickly enough to stand athwart the *Sarah's* path. Spencer's men stood by their starboard battery, guns strained forward to maximum train, and picked up the stranger at six hundred yards.

Malloy mentally congratulated his skipper upon a nice judgment. Had the stranger been a hundred yards closer at the moment of shifting tacks, the vessels would have collided. Instead, the *Sarah* foamed by the collision point with the stranger a futile hundred yards away. She had lost the wind, but had won free to the west.

Furious, the stranger heeled to starboard so that her battery swung into line. "What ship are you?" bawled a voice on the wind, as the stranger dropped slowly astern.

Malloy's gunners strained to track their target. Bart ignored the challenge, which, at three hundred yards, was followed by a broadside that ripped the night. The *Sarah* cringed from blows, but neither Bart nor Malloy gave orders to return the fire, for almost as one gun the *Sarah's* battery flamed. Then the ships boiled ahead, while gunners tore their hands reloading.

Bart overlooked the spontaneous breach of discipline. The *Sarah* was sound beneath his hands, and he concentrated every faculty upon taking her away from her assailant. He could not afford to duel, not with a second ship less than two leagues away. And so, while gunners turned white faces appealingly to him to put the wind on either beam and give them another shot at the stranger, he held grimly to his course.

The outmaneuvered stranger gave up the chase, hove to, her head to the mouth, and fired a broadside at the *Sarah's* heels. Langridge ripped into her sails and Bart winced. They were nearly twelve hundred yards distant when the stranger managed to put about to fire her port battery. The shot spouted in the water about the *Sarah,* but none hit her. It was the last broadside of the engagement. Before the stranger could reload, the *Sarah* was beyond range.

Bart found himself sweating when he beckoned to a quartermaster to take over the helm, and lighted a cigar. Aft, the stranger had doggedly turned onto the *Sarah's* track. He waited thoughtfully until Malloy arrived with a report of their casualties. His cigar was almost half-gone.

"Seven men killed, sir," Malloy said. "Nine wounded."

"Not bad. Damages?" His voice was calm, but his heart jumped.

"Nothing fatal," Malloy was happy to say. "The carpenter is busy below."

Bart breathed easy. So long as the hull was sound, he wasn't too worried about the langridge through his sails. None had ripped, and those which had been holed could be unbent and replaced. He blessed the Yankee sailmaker who had insisted upon his using sails made up of horizontal rather than vertical strips. Almost everyone, including the Royal Navy, used vertical strips, which, when wounded, split and spilled the wind. Horizontal strips might split, but they would continue to draw so long as boltropes held.

"Lay aloft," he said, "and see what has to be done."

"Aye aye, sir," Malloy replied, and went up the mizzen shrouds.

BART did not leave his quarterdeck, for, even without his nightglass he could still make out the shape of the northern ship which had proved to be as swift as

the *Sarah*. Being in the easterly winds which blasted over the Windward Islands, the *Sarah* was safe from her pursuer so long as she was whole, but any decrease in her rate through the water would bring her pursuer that much closer. Bart did not want to be caught, for he strongly suspected that his antagonists were sloops of the Royal Navy. The force and uniformity of that first broadside almost certainly would not have come from a mere privateer, and much though he might be willing to pit the *Sarah* against a single sloop, good sense protested against standing her up against a pair.

Thus, when Malloy announced that four stunstails had been shot away, and twice as many sails pierced, Bart was properly dismayed. "Any of the courses?" he asked hopefully.

"The foresail," Malloy replied.

Bart looked up. The wind was moderate, with no signs of freshening. He was in a dilemma. If he changed sail, he would lose way, tire his men, and bring the other sloop within range about the time his men were worn. If he did not change sail, he could hold his own and possibly discourage the chase, but he did not know how long the canvas would support its present strain nor what would happen if the wind increased. He decided to gamble. Should Fortune favor him, and the *Sarah* rode out the night, then her pursuers might be discouraged by their failure to catch her. On the other hand, if he replaced sail, both might catch her before dawn, or, if they did not, dawn would have brought them so close they could not in conscience abandon her.

He almost won his gamble, but the false dawn brought him a discomfiting discovery. Strung in a line across the western horizon, six shapes barred his way. There was no direction in which he could turn without ultimately being caught. And then, as if that were not bad enough, the wind freshened sufficiently to split the foresail, then a top, and then another sail, until he was forced to drive his hollow-eyed men aloft.

As the sun floated above the eastern horizon, Bart thought he saw a ship on every point of the compass, and prepared to fight.

Wounded, the gallant *Sarah* stubbornly limped westwards to the oncoming ships. Seven canvas bundles awaited the last rites on her weatherdeck, but there was no time to accord them this dignity. Astern, her grim trackers moved in for the kill. Bart studied the fear-molded faces of the gunners whose eyes watched his smallest movement. Whether they wished it or not, their lives were in his hands.

Impulsively, he mounted the after hatchcover and shouted through his speaking trumpet for attention. Save for the whip of water and the whimpering flutter of wounded canvas, the *Sarah* fell silent. "Men!" he bellowed. "We will try to fight through! I will not order you to remain at your posts. All who wish to preserve themselves may lay below."

He stepped down from the hatchcover, waiting for panic to shake his ship. Instead, his terrified Yankee crew burst out into three cheers, and remained where they were, some because they were foolish, some for fear of their comrades' opinion, and some because they were afraid to face death in the darkness of the hold.

Aloft, a seaman who was hauling on a stubborn bit of canvas turned to his mate and asked what the cheering was about.

"The captain gave permission for you to lay below," Malloy replied, his powerful hands dragging at the sail. "Move and I'll throw you into the sea!"

"I was only curious," the seaman muttered resentfully and bent back into his task.

ON the quarterdeck, Bart reconsidered his heroic outburst and slowly reddened. Words would not get the *Sarah* out of her situation. He had only one choice. Closehauling would slow down every ship, except the one to the north, which was still in position to take advantage of a northerly course. And so, he put the *Sarah* on a port tack to the southeast, running away from the Indies, but also running away from the new group of arrivals.

The signal locker contained a Grand Union flag, patterned upon the *Ranger's*, and after deliberation, Bart broke it out from the maintruck. For all practical purposes, he was in the Continental Navy, and he felt himself permitted to fly a national ensign. The Connecticut flag snapped above his taffrail, indignant at

being displaced, but he did not have another.

He looked to the ships which had been pursuing him. Clear and bold in the bright morning sun the ensign of the Royal Navy flew over the nearer. Once again she was on an interception course, and once again the *Sarah* would feel her weight of metal. Bart chose her in preference to her running mate, because he had already encountered her captain and taken his measure. Despite her character, he felt that the *Sarah* had a chance, whereas the northern vessel was an unknown factor.

He looked to the west and his heart sank. Two of the six were schooners and two were brigs. Their fore-and-aft rig was making short work of his hopes to brush once more past the British sloop. However, there was nothing else to do, and so the *Sarah* remained steady on her course. The odds were so preposterous, a certain fatalism enveloped the ship. Guncrews carefully tested their gear, rearranged shotracks and powdertubs, and polished metal. Aloft, topmen struggled with canvas as though the world were at peace and they had nothing but a routine job in the day's work.

The sloop was within one mile and the leading schooner within two when Bart ordered all hands to stand to their guns. A lone gun thudded on the sloop and threw a shot a hundred yards short of the *Sarah*. Bart looked to the west. The schooner would perforce be silent for several minutes.

Another of the sloop's guns kicked back into its tackle and dropped its shot short. Then another and another. Bart boiled with anger. The British were taking advantage of the situation to instruct their guncrews in long-range gunnery. Each minute tended to increase their accuracy, but lessened his respect. At length he could no longer tolerate the contemptuous cannonade, and nodded to his leading quarterdeck gunner.

"Show them how to shoot," he ordered.

The gunner tried and missed. The range was too great for six-pound shot, still Bart was hopeful. With his reputation at stake, the gunner put two cartridges behind the ball, ordered the vicinity cleared, and touched the vent with his match. The six-pounder broke its retaining tackle, but its shot did not splash. Somewhere, it drilled into the sloop's stout sides.

The sloop ceased firing, and set about closing the range. The British did not relish lessons in either seamanship or gunnery.

"Well done," Bart said, and ordered a tot of rum for all hands.

The sloop was within a thousand yards when a quartermaster excitedly touched Bart's arm. "Sir!" he exclaimed. "The schooner!"

Bart stared. The quartermaster was pointing to her maintruck. Heart in his mouth, Bart snatched up his glass and looked. A snapping bit of cloth filled the telescope and his soul, for it represented a flag he had never seen before. He shifted his glass to the nearest brig, and thought he saw the same colors. He did not know what the ensign represented, but it was not the flag of England, and that was enough for him.

Tattered sails snapping boltropes, he swung the *Sarah's* head again to the west, steering for the vessels now scarcely more than a mile away. Combined speed closed that distance in three minutes, and he came close aboard the schooner which hailed him with the information that she was the *Diligence,* fourteen guns, of the South Carolina Navy, Captain Lumpkin commanding. And then, while the *Sarah* dove for the safety of Guadeloupe, Captain Lumpkin indomitably flung his small vessel across the path of the pursuing British sloop and obliged her to stand and fight, until the others closed action.

The *Sarah* made Fort de France without further incident.

CHAPTER VI

FREE CARGO

SNUG in the Anchorage de la Dillon, the *Sarah* rested in the best harbor of the Antilles and licked her wounds. Scarcely a mile to the northwest, the city Fort de France nestled among the foothills of Martinique which sent a high peninsula stabbing out into the Bay to provide a base for Fort St. Louis. To the west, in the Anchorage des Flamands, three frigates and a corvette lazily flew the white

The Diligence *obliged the British sloop to stand and fight.*

flag and lilies of the Bourbons under the brilliant August sun.

While Malloy supervised the unloading of their battered cargo into barges which would deliver the goods directly to their purchaser's dock in the bight of the tiny Baie du Carenage, Spencer broodingly prepared to go ashore to the Custom House.

"Don't bother with the accounts," he said. "I will be back soon."

"Aye aye, sir," Malloy replied. "The hold will be ready to receive sugar in the morning."

Spencer looked to the southwest where, a couple of miles away, a large ship was cautiously skirting the shallows off the tiny island of Ramiers. Ordinarily, this had been for him the most enjoyable moment in port, when he paid his duties and shopped about for a new cargo. This time he had an inexplicable feeling of uneasiness. "Very well," he said. "Anything I can get for you?"

"The mess can always use rum," Malloy answered dryly.

Spencer nodded and went over the side to his boat. Casting off its painter, the coxswain sheered away from the *Sarah* and headed for the customs wharf. A fist-

ful of francs wadded into his coat pocket, Spencer had all of Martinique before him, and yet he was not elated, only tired, and vaguely troubled.

"She's a frigate, Cap'n," the coxswain remarked.

Spencer turned his sweating face to the southwest, where the new arrival had come clearly within view. "Yes," he said. "A good fifteen hundred tons."

The coxswain agreed and took advantage of his skipper's obvious preoccupation to give his men an easy pull to the wharf. Absently, Bart kept his eyes on the vessels anchored beyond Fort St. Louis, picking out those which were American. He wondered what their captains were doing. Then the boat drew alongside the wharf, and he had to face his business.

"Here," he said, drawing a bill from his pocket, "set a watch. I'll be back by six bells."

"Aye aye, sir," said the coxswain, proud of the trust which made it unnecessary for his captain to forbid drunkenness.

Reluctantly, Bart quit his boat and walked the short distance to the Custom House. The place was more crowded than usual, and he had to wait his turn. He did not mind the delay, sitting down beside a fair, lean youngster, whose taste in clothes was Colonial. They struck up an acquaintaince when Bart tried to light a cigar and found his flint was worn and the youngster graciously offered his own. His name was Hill, and he was a lieutenant in the South Carolina Navy.

"South Carolina?" Bart said warmly. "I am forever in her debt!"

Silently, Hill listened to Bart's story of the chase by the two sloops, his frank face politely attentive. When Bart concluded with a compliment he had never dreamed of paying to a Southerner, Hill said simply, "We are in this war together, sir." Then he smiled. "My brig was one of the six."

"Then you know Captain Lumpkin," Bart said warmly.

Hill nodded. "My cousin, sir."

Bart held out a hand. "Pray give me his address, Mr. Hill!"

The South Carolinian looked away. "You cannot write him, sir," he said in his soft drawl. "The sloop blew up the *Diligence*. She lost all hands. The rest of us got away after you were clear."

There was nothing for Bart to say, as his insides slowly tightened with the impact of the news. He sat quite still until Hill's name was called and with a gracious word or two the South Carolinian took leave to go about his ship's affairs. Bart was shaken. He had spent his life for Spencer & Son, living for himself, standing on his own powerful legs against the world. He had grown to manhood knowing no duty except to himself.

Even when the Custom House broke into a roar with the news that the frigate *Concorde* had just come with dispatches announcing a state of war between England and France, he sat apart from the pandemonium. The faces of Sarah, Tarrant, and Jones converged in his mind with a gallant image of a South Carolinian named Lumpkin who assumed the visage of his cousin, Hill. Through the melange only one lucid thought emerged, again and again, Hill's drawled, "We are in this war together, sir."

A polite official had to shake him by the shoulder before he realized that his turn had come. Automatically, he paid his duties and ignored the Frenchman's commentary on the *Concorde's* dispatches. With a receipt in hand, he left the Custom House to wander out into the maddened streets of Martinique.

In the midst of the rioting, his head suddenly cleared, and with purposeful strength he made his way through the crowds.

AT EIGHT bells, he was back aboard the *Sarah,* and let his boatcrew explain the town's insanity while he called his officers into his cabin. He had expected them to be surprised when he announced his plans. They were not. Malloy grinned sardonically as though he had foreseen the entire matter, and was helpful with suggestions.

And so, the following evening, after all hands had supped, the *Sarah* hauled up her anchor and stood out into the night past la Pointe des Nègres. Under easy sail, she reached the latitude of Cape St. Martin by midnight and entered Dominica Channel for the twenty-five mile leg to her objective. As the mid-watch was relieved, she rounded Cachacrou Head, and by the time dawn starkened the outlines

of the mountains, she had slipped her keel onto the fine dark sand just south of Point Michelle, let out an anchor for kedging off, and put her men ashore.

Bart Spencer had invaded the British island of Dominica.

"Well," Malloy said, as he breakfasted on a pot of chocolate, "there are times when a little schooner is more attractive than a full-sized ship."

"We should fill the hold before sundown," Bart replied. "Finish your chocolate and get a pick."

"Me?" Malloy protested.

"You," Bart said, and slapped his mate on the shoulder. "This is an all-hands evolution, including mine. Let's go."

Malloy put down his mug. "The British won't like this," he said, surging with a grunt out of his comfortable chair. "The least we could do is pay them." He glanced up at the sentries who had been posted on the high point which screened the *Sarah* from casual detection by the troops of General Prescott. Then, stripping off his shirt, he went ashore just as the first bags were heaved aboard.

The August sun broiled, and by noon the *Sarah* was scarcely half-filled. Her men, unaccustomed to shovel and pick, soon lost their enthusiasm and were kept at their work only by Bart's tireless example. His powerful muscles coiled and flashed under a sweaty sheen as he drove himself to hew the raw stuff into chunks ready for sacking. He did not pause for food, taking only water.

Eyes and nostrils inflamed, the men of the *Sarah* wished their skipper had been able to stuff the hold with a hundred thousand Charleville muskets instead of only a twentieth as many. Near each man lay a gleaming new weapon, and a temptation to use it came and went more often as the work dragged endlessly on.

They were relieved then, when the regular British patrol of the fields suddenly announced its presence with a blast of musketry. Without instructions, the men of the *Sarah* snatched up their pieces and looked for the enemy who had dropped two of them into the pits they were digging.

High on the hillside towards Roseau, a squad of brilliant redcoats burned in the bright sun. Bart cursed the sentries whose eyes had been focused on the sea. The patrol must have been visible from the moment its members trudged wearily out of the capital on their daily check of the only island resources which were of interest to the Yankee rebels. This was not the first time those troops had come upon Yankees armed with pick and shovel, and they went about their business in an unhurried, rehearsed way.

Spreading out along the hillside, the British regulars scorned the spattering of musketballs flung at them by the Yankees, found protective rocks, and settled down for long-range sniping, sheltered from assault except from the point where the *Sarah's* sentries squatted.

Bart looked around, uncertain of himself. He had relied too much upon his sentries, and their blindness had jeopardized the whole enterprise. Then he saw Malloy and knew what to do. Malloy had plunged into the water and was scrambling up the *Sarah's* bow. "Throw down your muskets!" Bart bawled. "Dig!" Overborne by his personality, some men obeyed, but most remained prone and plied their muskets with the fervor of self-preservation.

Between the claps of musketry sounded the thunder of a great gun. Almost instantly a spray of rock burst below a British soldier, the stones on which he sprawled slipped in a miniature avalanche and he fell screaming down the precipice to smash against a boulder. The scream stopped, and the musketry slackened, as the *Sarah's* seamen stared at the smoke which blew back over her from a bowport.

"Dig, damn it!" Bart cried, and ran about yanking his men from their pits.

And thus the bags again began to be filled, were carried down to the water's edge, slung to the traveller, and hauled out to the *Sarah,* while Malloy tried to use a six-pounder as a precision rifle, until the British, disheartened by the pulping of another man, fled over the ridge to await reinforcements from Roseau. Stimulated by fear, the *Sarah's* crew completed three hours' work in one, sent out the last bag, and embarked.

INSTEAD of being permitted to rest, they set to work on the capstan to wind the *Sarah* out towards her kedge before ships could sail down from Roseau to snare her.

The crestfallen sentries had reported several vessels were shaking out sail, and Bart was willing to cut his cable when the *Sarah* drifted over her anchor, but Malloy with distinguished *sang-froid* deftly brought it clear of the bottom.

Standing at their guns, most of the *Sarah's* crew chafed at the seeming slowness with which topmen unfurled canvas. The *Sarah* was virtually becalmed until the current carried her almost clear of Point Michelle. Then, almost at once, her sails filled and she gathered way while enraged British ships bore down on her.

Bart did not have to fight. Calmly setting full sail and taking the wind on his starboard quarter, he outran the guardians of Dominica into the night.

He did not know until much later that he could have saved himself four men by waiting little more than two weeks, for on September 7th, le Marquis de Bouillé landed on Dominica with two thousand men and seized the rich little island for King Louis of France. By that time the *Sarah* had made her landfall on Long Island.

She had an easy passage up the Sound to the Race, and entered the Thames River without meeting the *Cerberus* or any other British blockader. Indeed, the Sound swarmed with Yankee ships, for le Comte d'Estaing was rocking with his eleven ships-of-the-line off Newport, after having astounded Lord Howe by his quiet arrival at Sandy Hook. The *Cerberus* and her consorts had gone to war.

Tacking up the Thames, Bart worked the *Sarah* alongside the dock of Spencer & Son, and with the sense of a job well-done, doubled up and secured. Within the hour, he paid off his seamen, so they could spread good cheer through New London. He gave his mates a week's leave, which Malloy declined, choosing instead to recruit a new crew and to make some necessary repairs.

Then, Bart had time for his chief clerk.

"I had almost struck you and the *Sarah* off the books," Bates said upon entering the cabin. "Welcome home, sir."

"Thank you," Bart replied. "Sit down."

Bates took a chair and respectfully put his precise little figure at ease. He had a hundred questions to ask, but controlled his curiosity, because in due time he could read the log. He did, however, have a legitimate matter to discuss. "We this week received a communication from Messrs. Gourlade and Moylan of Nantes, France. Your prize, *The Fair Sister,* was adjudged lawful prize. Congratulations, sir."

"Damnation!" Bart exclaimed. He had not imagined that the news would precede the *Sarah*. "Has the word leaked out?"

"Well, sir," Bates said defensively, surprised by his employer's reaction. "I did tell your mother, as a matter of pride."

Bart sighed and poured a drink. "Then the news is all over town," he said. "As a matter of pride."

Bates shifted under the heavy-browed glare, coughed, and murmured helpfully, "I'll check the manifest through Customs if you wish to go ashore now, sir."

"I doubt if that will be necessary," Bart remarked, and poured another drink, corked the bottle and put it away. "You might look over the accounts, however, while I shave."

"Yes, sir!" Bates said eagerly.

Bart pushed his ledger across the desk, got up, and strode to his bureau. While he stripped to the waist, Bates happily entered the familiar realm of digits. Slowly, enjoying the opportunity to use hot water without worry of having it splash onto the deck, Bart lathered his stubble, stropped his razor, and shaved. By the time he finished, Bates' brain had clicked over the entries to the total of the Brest sales, and was busy with the transactions at Fort de France. Bart bathed his torso, dried himself with a huge towel, took off his duck trousers, and step by step proceeded to look like a gentleman of wealth, from his white silk shirt to his varnished black boots.

Slipping into a coat of fine blue broadcloth, he turned to Bates. His secretary and chief clerk was baffled scanning the pages of the ledger. "Anything wrong?" Bart asked pleasantly.

Bates looked over his spectacles. "I can not find the entries of your purchases at Martinique," he replied.

"Small wonder," Bart said. "I didn't buy anything there. I got a free cargo at Dominica."

"Ah," Bates smiled. "Then you have the answer to your question."

"Yes," Bart said. "I think I do."

TWILIGHT made the dingy town of New London look comfortable and cosy to Bart Spencer when he reached Bank Street. Not wishing to disarrange his person by haste, and content to breathe at his leisure the familiar air of home, he took his time about going to the office of the Connecticut Navy Agent. Mr. Deshon was not in, so Bart sat down and wrote a note which he had rewritten in his mind throughout the voyage from the Indies. The clerk on duty promised to deliver it to the Navy Agent as soon as possible.

Again on Bank Street, Bart strolled home, well aware that the efficient Bates had sent a messenger to his mother the instant that the *Sarah* was reported to be in the river. Mrs. Spencer was trained in the habits of seafaring men, and would be surprised to see him home so early. He smiled to himself as he thought he might possibly catch her in the lengthy prayers she always offered to God upon the safe return of first her husband and then her only son.

He was denied the opportunity. She was not at home. The housekeeper explained that Mrs. Spencer had gone to his aunt's in Essex. Somehow, Bart was just as pleased. With his mother at home, he would have found it difficult to escape for an hour or two later in the evening. As it was, he had a cold supper grumblingly scraped together for him, while he took a hot bath to rid himself of salt water.

Thus, towards nine o'clock, he was able to present himself at the Turnbull door. As usual, the Turnbulls were entertaining, but he knew that the gentlemen would be at their wine, and he had not come to see the master of the house. He received a warmer greeting from the footman than he had received in his own home, and was promptly ushered into the drawing room.

Five pairs of eyes stared as he made his over-sized version of a leg, and then Mrs. Turnbull said, "Welcome, Mr. Spencer," and held out her hand. Beside her, Mistress Sarah managed to look entirely unconcerned. Bart acknowledged the greetings of the other ladies, who were all friends of his mother, and sat down in one of the delicate French chairs with which the Turnbulls attempted to disguise their yeoman origins.

With a brute of a man thrown in the midst of their tedious conversation, the ladies naturally devoted their attention to him, insisting upon knowing if it were true he had taken a British ship.

"Yes," Bart admitted, with a seaman's careful distinction, "we captured a brig."

This, of course, necessitated his recital of the circumstances, despite his modest disinclination to speak. Throughout the urging, Mistress Sarah was silent, studying him with enigmatic eyes, and finally, unable to strike a spark of sympathy from her glance, he yielded. He was thoroughly uncomfortable, for as he spoke, Sarah kept her eyes on his, protected by the women from the necessity of having to give him a private audience.

The master of terse entries in a log, he foundered into verbosity, confusing the ladies with details they were disinterested in. He was, therefore, thoroughly relieved when the door to the dining room opened and the gentlemen came to join their ladies.

"Oh, Mr. Spencer," Mistress Sarah said politely, "please continue your thrilling narrative of blood. How much did you make from *The Fair Sister?*"

She serenely waved her fan as though she had not scandalized the company by her boldness. In the silence, Mr. Turnbull held out a warm hand, and the gentlemen with him added their greetings. Bart was particularly pleased to hold the hand of Mr. John Deshon.

"May I tell them?" Mr. Deshon said. "I had your note this evening."

"Yes," Bart replied, looking at Sarah. "Please do."

The Connecticut Navy Agent smiled at the faces around the room. "Ladies," he said, with a slight bow, "gentlemen. Mr. Spencer has this day offered himself and his ships to our cause. More than that, he has brought with him enough sulphur to keep our gunpowder factories supplied for months. We owe him our thanks."

Bart ignored the applause of the elder people who did not have to see men die. Sarah had lifted her fan to cover her suddenly white face. Bart grimly excused himself, strode out into the hall, snatched up his hat, and stormed out into the New London night.

It was a magnificent display of temper, but Mistress Sarah knew as well as he that he would return.

"No, no, you fool," Gordon screamed. "Let him win by twenty lengths!"

A PIG IN THE PADDOCK

By

GILES A. LUTZ

OLD DAN SEEFORT boiled as he watched the auctioneer's futile efforts to raise the bid on the horse in the sales ring. It was a rigged sale, and he knew it. All he could do was push the bidding up, though he was sweating inside at the thought of having it dropped on him. "Twelve thousand," he barked. He didn't have that much cash money. Those two brood mares he had purchased last week had just about tapped him for ready cash.

The auctioneer flashed him a gratified smile. "Twelve thousand, I'm bid, gentlemen. Do I hear more?"

Emil Gordon's eyes were malevolent slits as he glared across the sales ring at Dan. He would have picked up High Flash for a great deal less, if Dan hadn't been there.

The sweat popped out on Dan's forehead. It looked like Gordon was through. Right now, Dan couldn't afford the horse, and Johnny Walters wouldn't get his money.

The auctioneer chanted for thirteen thousand. Gordon hesitated a long moment, then nodded abruptly.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN MEOLA

Dan let out a sigh of relief. Gordon had almost been ready to drop the bid on him. Dan didn't dare go a dollar higher.

The auctioneer cajoled and pleaded. "Thirteen thousand for High Flash? Come now, gentlemen. Winner of three important two-year-old stakes. He's worth twice —" He stopped abruptly. He couldn't break the impassiveness of this small crowd. He looked beseechingly at Dan, and Dan shook his head. "Sold," the auctioneer snapped. "Sold to Mr. Gordon for thirteen thousand."

GORDON'S oily smile came back, and he complacently folded his fat hands over his stomach.

"First time I ever seen a hog in pants," Dan exploded. He whirled on his companion. "Ben, he stole that horse."

Ben South said soothingly, "No, he didn't, Dan. He'll pay for him." Ben South was Dan's breeding farm manager. He spent a great deal of his time keeping Dan calmed down. He had known Dan since his teen years, and his one big fear was that Dan's temper would make him bite off more than he could chew. His heart was as big as a barn, and his eyes were gentle. He hated selfishness and unfairness, and Gordon was a composite of both. Dan's blood pressure had gone up fifteen points ever since Gordon bought the farm next to his.

"He stole it," Dan snapped. "I heard the bidding. Whatever possessed Johnny Walters to let Gordon handle this sale for him?" Dan's ego was a little bruised. Walters should have turned to him, but he hadn't. Gordon. Dan exploded again. He'd just as soon ask a rattlesnake for help.

Ben said calmly, "Johnny was a pretty sick man, Dan. Gordon was there. You weren't. Maybe he thought Gordon being the richest man in the valley would pull more people to the sale. Johnny'll get a fair piece of change from the sale of his string. It'll last him a good while."

The savageness didn't leave Dan's face. It had been a blow to Johnny Walters to learn he had to spend some time in Arizona for his lungs. It meant immediate disposal of his three race horses, and he was too sick to attend to details. Gordon had taken them off his hands, and Walters had been grateful. Dan guessed what had happened. Gordon spread the word by mouth instead of printed announcements. And he had hand-picked his crowd. Most of the men in that crowd owed Gordon something. They were afraid to bid against him. Dan had been struck speechless at the rapidity with which the two first horses had gone. Gordon had put in a bid far below their value, and no one contested it. Dan had entered the bidding for High Flash, and he had pushed the cost up as far as he had dared.

"Johnny got half what he should have," he said grimly.

A silky voice asked, "What's the matter, Seefort? Sore because you didn't get High Flash?"

Dan whirled to face Gordon. Gordon was a great gross man with tiny, glittering eyes. He was cruel to man and animal alike, but his money made a bulwark for him. "I ain't racing horses anymore," Dan raged. "And I got enough horses on my farm. You worked it slick, you fat pig. You stole Johnny's horses."

The good humor was wiped from Gordon's face as thoroughly as an eraser cleanses a blackboard. "Take it easy," he warned.

Dan shook off Ben's restraining hand. "You ain't satisfied with owning most of the money and the biggest stock farm around here. You got mortgages on a dozen others and that don't fill you up. You got fifty horses and you still steal Johnny's."

"I bid—"

"I saw who was at the sale. You promised Johnny to see the word got around. It did. To men under your thumb. Those fellas were afraid to open their heads. You pulled it slick." Dan ignored Ben's waving hands. He didn't have to bridle his tongue. He owed nothing to this grabber. He paused for a deep breath. "This night's gonna cost you."

He walked away with Gordon's sardonic laughter picking at him with scratchy fingers.

Ben said woefully, "A lot of people heard you, Dan. They'll be laughing at you."

"Let 'em," Dan snarled. "They'll laugh on the other side before I'm through."

He sat in the sun the next week and

thought. He didn't have an animal in his barn that could run against any of Gordon's. He had made a statement in anger, but he wasn't backing a step. That night was going to cost Gordon. Dan had horses, but they were breeding stock. For the last twelve years he had been content to raise thoroughbreds and let younger hearts stand the strain of racing them. He wanted to skin Gordon on a racetrack —where a great number of people could see it. Back in his horse runnings days, he had been known as a pretty canny conditioner. People used to say a man would have to go a long way to beat him.

A long way. His head came up, and his eyes flashed. He crashed his fist down upon his palm and cackled. By granny, there might be a way to put a ring in that hog's nose.

IT WAS the third day of the Crestview meet when old Dan walked into the track kitchen. Dawn was just making its tardy appearance, and yet the kitchen was crowded.

Dan ordered a cup of coffee, sipped it, and shuddered. "In twenty years, they ain't improved the way they make racetrack coffee."

A dozen heads turned at his words, then there was a concentrated rush toward him. Dan had always been popular around any man's racetrack.

"Dan, are you running anything in this meet?"

"Got the runningest thing on plates here."

"Who? One of your two-year-olds?"

Dan snorted. "Nobody knows what a green two-year-old can do. I know this one. Ever hear of Memory Hour?"

There was a long silence, then someone asked hesitantly, "Dan, isn't he nine years old? Hasn't he been retired the last three years?"

"Yup." Dan nodded complacently. "I'm bringing him back. He can still outrun anything here."

"Maybe you think he can beat one of my horses?"

Dan faced Gordon. "Didn't know you were here," he said in surprise. "I'm backing everything I said."

Gordon wore an amused smile, but the cold glitter was in his eyes. "You can beat Constellation?"

"Sure. At two miles."

"What do we race for? Marbles?" Gordon looked about the room, and his smile said he was humoring a harmless old man. He looked back at Dan and said softly, "Constellation runs for important purses."

Dan colored at the insult in Gordon's tone. "You been trying to buy that south hundred acres of mine. Put up an equal chunk of your own right across the fence from it. We'll get the racing secretary to make it a match race. That a big enough bet?"

Dan heard the suckings of breath around the room and knew what everyone was thinking. That hundred acres was the best part of Dan's place. It was too big a bet with a horse like Memory Hour to carry it.

"Done," Gordon snapped. "We'll see the secretary for a date." He was pushing this hard now. Dan had said rash words before witnesses, and Gordon was giving them no chance to cool.

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WILDROOT CREAM-OIL HAIR TONIC

Dan saw the stricken faces around the kitchen and managed a cocky grin. But inside he was shivering. The bait had to be big to pull Gordon from his hole. But that prize hundred acres! His face was sober as he walked with Gordon toward the racing secretary's office.

The secretary refused to listen at first. "Of all the crazy races. Constellation against Memory Hour. Who would want to see it?"

Gordon's tone was frost-tinged. "I've got some important horses here. I might ship them before the meet's over. What would that do to some of your big races?"

The secretary's face reddened. He opened his mouth, and Dan shook his head at him. Dan said, "Let me talk to him, Gordon."

Gordon unwillingly walked to the other side of the room, and Dan whispered rapidly in the secretary's ear. He told him about the sale and about Johnny Walters. "You knew Johnny," he finished. "I'm trying to get his money back for him."

The secretary stared a long moment at Dan. "You know what you're doing?"

"I hope so," Dan said solemnly.

The secretary called Gordon back and said, "I can put it on three weeks from this coming Friday. It'll carry a fifteen-hundred-dollar purse. That's the best I can do."

Gordon walked out of the office, and the gloating grin was big on his face.

Dan watched him move away. He said softly, "You ain't won it yet, you fat hog."

THE coming match aroused a great deal of interest from horsemen. Gordon had a good animal in Constellation. The horse was five years old with nice purses behind and before him. Old Memory Hour had never been much. The consensus was that Dan had let his dislike of Gordon run away with him. Ben said so in long and fervent swear words. Dan put a sphinx-like mask on his face and outwardly never wavered. What went on inside him was his own business.

Gordon went immediately to work with serious training of Constellation. At the end of the week, Constellation had been set down for a sharp half mile. Memory Hour had been on the track for a lazy canter. By the middle of the second week, Constellation had worked a mile and turned in nice time. Memory Hour was still doing lazy gallops.

Ben was frantic. Gordon was working his head off, and Dan just sat and smoked and whittled.

"Yup," Dan answered his protests. "Noticed him rushing around. Don't do no good. Only makes you short of breath." He winked at Ben, and Ben threw up his hands and walked away.

Constellation went the entire distance of two miles to start the third week. He finished strongly, and his time was good. Memory Hour stepped an average half mile workout. Ben went around talking to himself. Dan had gone crazy. He stood to lose the best part of his farm, and still he just sat. Memory Hour needed the same kind of workouts Constellation was getting.

Six days before the race, Memory Hour got a sharp seven furlong work. Tuesday, before Friday's race, Dan sent him the same distance.

"That'll be all," Dan said cheerfully, putting a linsey on the horse. "No more work for you until the race."

Ben gave up then. Not once had Memory been over the distance. And Constellation had gone the two miles again yesterday morning. There were some who said his last quarter tailed off a little, but those were the boys who always tried to build something out of nothing.

Ben almost went crazy the last two days before the race. Dan hadn't even selected his jockey. Sometimes Ben had a fear that old age had finally laid a too heavy finger on Dan's thinking. Look at him treating this matter as lightly as though he had nothing at stake!

"The race ain't run until Friday," Dan kept saying. He sighted down the board he was whittling on, then shaved another splinter from it. "I'll betcha anything Memory Hour has a jock by then." He grinned as Ben went away sputtering.

Gordon had engaged Donovan, the red-hot apprentice boy, to ride Constellation. Donovan was just a kid, but horses ran kindly for him. He was leading the list of riders, and smart horsemen said he would go even farther. Gordon had the better horse and the better boy. Most horsemen were already giving him the race.

Dan announced his boy at noon, Friday. "Lamberts will ride for me," he said.

"Great jumping golly," Ben protested. "He's a good jock, ain't he?"

"Was," Ben said bitterly. "Twenty years ago he was good. He hasn't had a dozen mounts in the last two years."

"Just because he got a little heavy doesn't mean he's forgotten how to ride. He can make a hundred and twenty-five pounds today."

He looked up at the clear, warm sky, with its dotting of motionless clouds. "This weather is good to old bones," he said softly. "I've cut many a fat hog on days like this."

Ben said sourly, "You won't cut one today," and walked away. He was sorry for Dan and disgusted, too.

THE match race was the sixth on the card. With real horsemen, the sixth race was the only one. They wanted to see Dan win, and they knew he couldn't.

Gordon and Dan were both in the paddock to supervise the saddling of their horses. Constellation was a big, powerfully-built bay. When Donovan was tossed into the saddle, they made a likely-looking pair.

Memory Hour, in contrast, was on the smallish side, his black coat a little dull. Lamberts was a tired-looking, wizened-faced old man. Donovan's fresh, youthful alertness made Lamberts more tired-looking than ever.

Ben felt like tears as he looked at the two entries. He had been looking out for Dan for a good number of years, but he had slipped this time, letting Dan get into this spot.

The horses started toward the track and Gordon said maliciously, "Wouldn't you like to see the race from my box? I'm having quite a few horsemen there."

Old Dan said blandly, "That's right kind of you."

He and Ben walked toward the box, and Ben said bitterly, "You know why he wants you there. He wants to crow before all those people."

That infuriating grin was on Dan's face. "It could be," he admitted.

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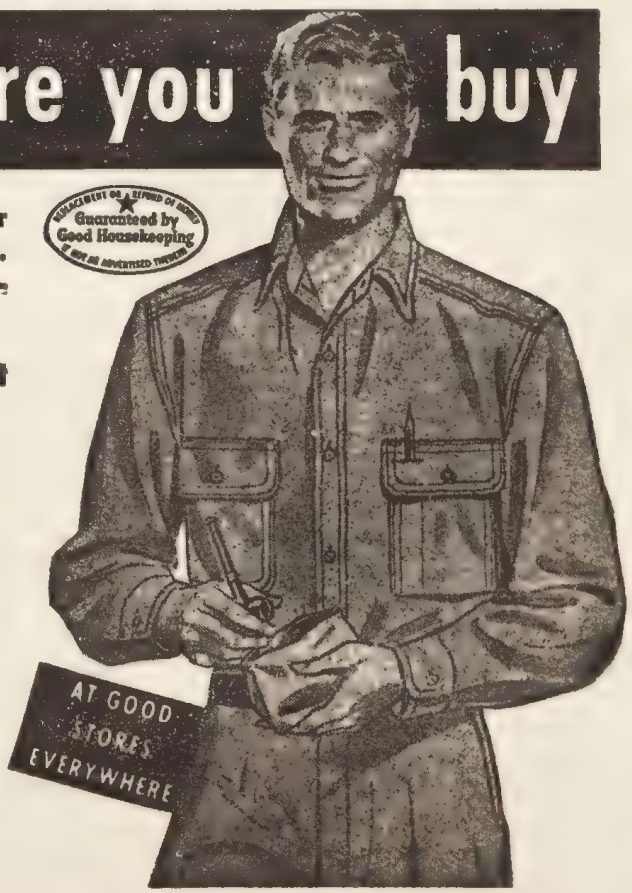

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The box was quite crowded when they arrived. Dan knew all of these men through long years of association. Their faces were sympathetic and concerned, and they wouldn't meet his eye. "The crowd don't like my horse, either," Dan said testily. "He's gone up to eight to five."

"Do you like him?" Gordon asked.

"I'll back him," was the prompt reply.

"I'll give you two to one," Gordon said magnanimously. His grin was oily and big. He had his fish safely in the net.

"Done," Dan snapped. "For fifteen thousand." He pulled large bills from his pocket. "Got it right here. Ben will hold stakes."

Ben made strangled sounds that Dan ignored. Gordon's eyes glittered. "I haven't that much with me," he said. "I'll have to write a check."

Dan took the check, verified the amount and handed it to Ben. "You giving up before the race's run?" he asked.

The two horses stepped into the gate, the starter quickly caught them in alignment and dispatched them. Constellation went to the front with great surging leaps.

"Young riders always show off," Dan remarked. "The kid is showing the old jock how fast he can get away from the switch. Long way to go, too."

Gordon gave him a baleful glance, but was silent.

At the clubhouse turn, Constellation was on top by four lengths, his great reaching stride scissoring the distance behind him.

Ben groaned hollowly. Gordon was openly jubilant. The remainder of the men in the box were silent. They were suffering for Dan.

"Pretty fast pace," Dan said mildly.

Turning into the backstretch, Constellation led by seven lengths. Donovan glanced behind him and took up a notch.

"Young jock decided maybe old jock knows something about pace," Dan said. "Decided maybe he'd better pull up and save something for directly."

Gordon snarled at him, then turned quickly back to the race. Memory Hour pulled up to within three lengths. Compared to Constellation he had no style at all. He plodded along like an old farm horse, Lamberts just sitting, like a city dude on a riding academy horse.

Donovan let out a reef, and Constellation bounded forward. In the back stretch he was on top by eighth lengths.

"He'll take him up again," Dan announced. "He'll get to worrying about the pace being too fast."

"Shut up," Gordon howled. His glasses were on the race, and Donovan was already taking up a little. "No, no, you fool," Gordon screamed. "Let him win by twenty lengths."

The eight lengths were cut to four, then to three as Memory Hour kept up his effortless running.

"Don't do a horse no good to be sawed on like that. You tell your boy that next time, Gordon."

Ben perked up a little. Memory Hour was behind, but he wasn't out of the race.

THE horses turned the far bend, and Donovan gave Constellation his head. He bounded away from Memory Hour, hugged the stretch turn tight and pounded down the straightaway, running in high, beautiful style. He was six in front, then eight, then ten. Gordon yelped excitedly, beating the railing before him.

"Only the first time around," Dan said mildly. "Young jock got excited when he hit the stretch and turned it on too soon."

He caught the pitying glance Ben and the other men gave him. The grin stayed on his face, but inside he was hurting. That gap between Constellation and Memory Hour was awful big.

The two horses went around the turn and into the back stretch. Memory Hour still moved along with that plodding stride, but he had cut three lengths off Constellation's lead.

"Constellation getting a little tired?" Dan asked.

Gordon didn't turn his head, but his knuckles whitened on his glasses. The horses turned the far bend, and Constellation was all out. But he couldn't increase his lead, and his stride seemed to be laboring a little. Memory Hour came creeping up. It didn't really look as though Memory Hour was gaining. Rather, Constellation was coming back to him.

Constellation went a little wide on the stretch turn. Lamberts kept Memory Hour on the rail and picked up more ground.

"Constellation's getting awful tired." Dan seemed to be talking to no one in particular. "Showed it in the way he swung out."

Gordon's face was livid. "If you open your head again—"

The bay and the black straightened out for the final run home, and Constellation had two lengths to the good. Donovan looked back, then pulled his bat and went to work with long, searing sweeps.

"Pulled it too soon," Dan said. "Got excited again. Look at Memory Hour." His voice rose in a long howl.

Memory Hour was charging down that stretch run. He came like the daylight flyer that had time to make up. He caught Constellation an eighth out, raced evenly with him for a half dozen bounds, then passed him! A sixteenth out, it was apparent the race was over. Memory Hour was two in front and increasing his lead. Lamberts sat nice and chilly.

Dan said softly, "Memory Hour's line shows he was bred for distance. Trouble was, there wasn't enough long races for him to make a showing. If there were more two-mile races carded instead of six furlongs and a mile, that horse would have been a champion. I got Lamberts because he had the experience. Back in his day, they used to run this distance. He knows how it should be ridden. Donovan doesn't. He took up Constellation and let him out until the horse must have been dizzy."

His eyes rested fondly on Memory Hour. The little black was just crossing the wire, a laughing winner.

Dan continued softly. His words were directed at Gordon, but he wanted all of them to hear. "Gordon worked Constellation out so much at the distance he must have got sick and tired of it. Sam Hildreth beat Papyrus with Zev in 1923 the same way. Papyrus went out and worked the distance just like Constellation did. After a horse was fit, Sam was content with short, speed-sharpening works. A lot of horsemen thought Sam was crazy then, too. If it was good enough for Sam, it was good enough for me. All I had to do was get Gordon in a two-mile race."

Ben handed over the money and Gordon's check. Dan might have let him in on this and saved him a lot of worry. He asked sourly, "Suppose Gordon worked Constellation the same way you did Memory Hour?"

"Not him," Dan said cheerfully. "His kind always figure the quickest way to get anything is to work hell out of everybody. You got to know people as well as horses." He fondled the check lovingly. "Let's see. I won thirty thousand. Fifteen thousand goes to Johnny Walters to make up for the money Gordon cheated him out of. I promised Lamberts five thousand. I clear ten thousand and that hundred acres. Oh yes, I almost forgot the purse. Fifteen hundred is money, ain't it, Gordon?"

He looked at Gordon, and his grin was hard and brilliant. Gordon's fat face had an unhealthy, doughy look, and he was slumped weakly in his chair.

"Now I got to wire Johnny about today," Dan said. "Figure it'll help him get well quicker. Guess I'll start it, *Dear Johnny: Today, we cut a fat hog—*"

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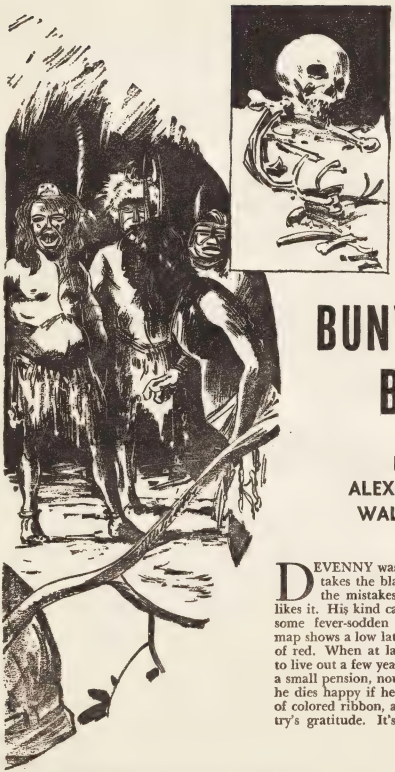


Solomen Benzuli received us before the door of his mud-walled beehive, backed up by his head men and warriors.

OLD BUNYOYO'S BONES

By ALEXANDER WALLACE

DEVENNY was the kind of man that takes the blame and the abuse for the mistakes of his superiors and likes it. His kind can be found rotting in some fever-sodden jungle wherever the map shows a low latitude and a good deal of red. When at last he goes home, it is to live out a few years of broken health on a small pension, nourished by his dreams; he dies happy if he's possessed of a piece of colored ribbon, a decoration, his country's gratitude. It's an imperial disease.

I don't say that they are all like that. I know they're not. Africa is cursed with too many of those who make a ritual of their palm-oil chop (a vile mess of chicken stewed in palm oil) and a virtue of stupidity. I am saying that Devenny was different and the difference was not such as would meet the eye. It was hidden behind a guileless smile and a face which, but for the toothbrush mustache he wore, wouldn't have been out of place among Benozzo Gozzoli's angels.

A dreamer, an idealist? Oh, no! There was nothing of the visionary about Devenny. I can vouch for that on the best of authority. My grandfather and father were both successful American businessmen. I came into the world understanding that only the angels work for love and not for money. But in spite of all that heredity and training can do for a man, Devenny put a fast one over on *me* and I want to tell you about that.

MY JOB was to build a dredge on a branch of the Kunene River which marks the boundary between Portuguese West Africa and the Union, with Angola on the Portuguese side and Ovampoland on the Union side. A Cape Town syndicate had bought up the rights to dredge for gold in the sun-baked flats that stretched for miles along the river. They weren't gambling. Experimental pits had shown good color, fifty cents to the cubic yard.

It was my first job in Africa and it was a tough one. I had to find my own labor, always a headache in Africa. Moreover the plates and machinery for the dredge had to be hauled in by ox cart across miles of desert and through a vast stretch of mopani forest where a dry river bed was a road one week and a roaring torrent the next.

Going "in" was like a jaunt through the Holy Land. The names of the settlements, the work of Moravian missionaries, read like a page from the Old Testament—Berseba, Gibeon, Rehoboth, until I got into Ovampoland and finally to Impumbi, North of the Etosha Pan.

Impumbi was a mud and wattle fort with white-washed castellated walls like those garrisoned by the French Foreign Legion in Algeria. In the days when Ovampoland was a part of German West Africa a whole regiment had goose-stepped around its ample parade ground, and when it hadn't been doing that, it had dispersed "kultur" over the countryside in a thorough-going way. In common with the majority of men, the Ovambos had found it hard to take and the old fort had seen action in its day.

In my time, something like a simon-pure attempt was being made to keep Ovampoland for the Ovambos. While settlement in the country was forbidden, the Ovambos were ruled by their hereditary chief, Solomen Benzuli. There wasn't an askari in the whole territory and Impumbi was "garrisoned" by a couple of Bushmen scouts, a native boy and Sergeant Aubrey Marsdon Devenny of the South African Police.

One man to police a whole District, to represent the white man's conception of justice and to see it done among twenty-five thousand Ovambos—that was Devenny's job. Was he equal to it? Well!

I rolled into Impumbi on a truck at sundown, not far ahead of a convoy of groaning ox carts. Devenny met me in the compound. He was a fellow of slight build, in his late thirties, with baby blue eyes and that funny little mustache, looking as if it was there lest there be some mistake about his sex. Lord! He didn't look the part! I supposed it was the insignia of the South African Police that pinned the brim of his stetson to its crown, that kept him on top.

"You must be the engineer chap," said he, shaking my hand and grinning boyishly. "Dredging for gold in *my* district—how dare you!"

"I'm building a dredge," said I. "A crew will come in to do the dredging when I've got the machine working."

"It's a mistake," said he, frowning.

"Don't tell me the 'diggings' are salted!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, it's not that! They shouldn't have issued a permit. My Ovambos won't like it."

"Well now, that's too bad!" I grinned. "But the big-wigs at the Cape evidently didn't think the natives would object."

"Don't know the first thing about it. Never been this far north, not one of 'em!"

"I see," said I slowly. At the Cape I'd been warned about the "obstruction" of petty officials.

"Maybe they should consult their sergeant more often," I finished caustically.

"They don't have to. *We* tell them!" He grinned good-humoredly. "But it does no good. Once you chaps get the smell of gold—"

"I'm just an engineer," I cut in sharply. "I work for wages—good wages."

"Really! Wish I could say the same! No offense meant, old fellow. You chaps—mere figure of speech. You see, the gorge you'll be working in is holy ground for the Ovambos, a sort of Valley of Kings. Old Bunyoyo is buried somewhere around there, but nobody knows just where."

"Bunyoyo! I've heard of him. A kind of national hero, isn't he?"

His face sobered. "Yes. Gave our chaps a bit of a mauling back in 'Seventeen."

"What started it?" I wanted to know.

"Glad to tell you. Come inside, it's cooler."

HE LED me into a large room with limed, mud walls. It was the only one in the fort with a roof left on it. Devenny's "boy," a hard-looking Somal with a livid scar across his left cheek and showing greasy battle ribbons on a dirty drill coat, served us with *cool* beer.

"Now, this chap, Bunyoyo," said Devenny, as I relished my drink. "A splendid fellow, a real war chief. He'd done some raiding across the Portuguese border. The Portuguese kicked about it. Our Government ordered Bunyoyo to come down to Windhoek to give an account of himself. He refused to obey and we went in after him. He fought like a gentleman and a hero. Led his warriors in three charges against machine guns. Found him later with seven holes in a line across his chest. Lucky for us that happened, they'd have wiped us out if it hadn't. But the point is, Bunyoyo knew that an Ovambo chief who left his country automatically ceased to be chief. He couldn't obey. The Government chaps didn't know it. It was all a ghastly misunderstanding. I wouldn't like anything like that to happen to *my* Ovambos."

A woman pleading for a wayward child couldn't have gotten a more vibrant timbre into her voice. But I distrust sentiment, particularly in men. There is usually a gyp lurking behind it.

"You wouldn't be trying to scare me away from your beloved Ovambos, would you, Sergeant?"

"My dear fellow! No thought of such a thing!" said he with a surprised look. "Now that you're here I'll do what I can to help. Bed down here for the night. I'll ride over to the gorge with you in the morning. There's something I want to show you on the way."

We went out the next morning before sun-up. It was only a four-hour ride to the gorge where I was to begin operations. By noon we were butting along in single file on the ridge of an escarpment overlooking an arid, pan-like stretch of plain. These burned patches were a common feature of the country—due to defrosting. The wealth of the Ovambos was in their cattle. They burned the forest to grow fodder for their stock; the result—desert and famine.

Devenny drew rein, waiting for me to come up. He pointed to where the river rolled sluggishly across the plain.

"This is what I wanted to show you," said he. "There's good soil there. I've often wondered if the river water could be used for irrigation. What d'you think?"

I studied the low bank of the river through his binoculars. "You couldn't have chosen a better spot," I approved. "A reservoir and a cotter dam would do it."

"Big job?"

"No. Sink a puddle-ditch down to bedrock. Fill in with clay. Slope the embankments about one to three, I'd say. Mud and wattle would do."

"Mud! D'you mean you could build a dam with the stuff we've got right here at hand?"

"Sure, why not?"

"Deucedly clever, you engineer chaps!" said he.

I laughed. "Egyptian farmers were doing it three thousand years ago."

"It's knowing the technique and how to apply it that counts. There's always famine here when the rains fail. I once dreamed that the river had overflowed its banks and this plain was sprouting flowers, millet and corn—an Elysian field, quite!"

There was a long pause. I turned to catch him looking at me with an odd, speculative look in his eyes.

"The trouble is," said he, "the Ovam-

bos have no money economy. Can't sell their cattle—lung disease. No money in the country except what the boys bring in from the mines and that doesn't stay in for long. We've taught them how to store grain against the lean years, but there's never enough. I've seen 'em starve."

"Flooding a few acres won't solve the problem, Devenny."

"It would for my district and it would show the others. They're intelligent, really. They could learn the technique—"

"Just a moment!" I interrupted him. "I know a build-up when I hear one. You're going to ask me to teach a bunch of savages how to build a dam in my spare time."

"Well, if you wanted to do something really constructive—"

"Constructive!" I looked at him with my mouth open. What did he think building a dredge with native labor was, a pastime? Feeling the sting of it, I retorted, "I'll build bridges and dams that'll go on record before I'm through!"

"My dear fellow, but of course you will! It's in the cut of your mouth and chin. You'll make oodles of money."

"Not by building dams *gratis*, Devenny."

"Well, you could sow a seed or two on the road to fortune, what?"

"I work for money," said I shortly.

"Won't do any harm to think about it, Rhys. You might change your mind when you get to know my Ovambos better."

"Like hell I will!" I dug my heels into my mount's flank.

"The Government collects a hut tax," I flung at him over my shoulder. "Try talking *them* into spending it!"

AN HOUR later we reached my camp site just above a gorge where the sluggish river tumbled over a table of red rock with a roar. A perpetual mist rose from the base of the falls like torn shreds of a pink veil. I was surprised to see that a mud and wattle hut had been built for me under the shade of the palms. Devenny explained that he had put a gang of Ovambos to work as soon as he had received official notice of my coming. My opinion of him went up several notches on the spot.

I am bound to say that I couldn't have finished the dredge without Devenny's help. It was the labor problem that licked me. I could teach an Ovambo to stoke a boiler, watch a steam gauge, to drive a winch, but teach him to drive a rivet—there was something about that quite beyond my capacity and patience.

Devenny did it. *He* could get his precious Ovambos to do anything! Inside of a month the gorge was re-echoing to the ring of hammers and the hull of the dredge began to take shape in the huge pit that had been dug to receive it.

Devenny rode over from time to time to see how the work was going on. He never mentioned the dam again and I was glad that he did not. I liked him. I owed him something for what he'd done for me. But that was a personal matter. I knew that he understood how I felt about it. Gratitude is one thing, business is another.

The dredge wasn't exactly a Tyne-side job, but she stayed afloat when we turned the water from the river into the pit. And, finally, the super-structure towered forty feet above her deck.

When I actually got the great machine working, I was as happy as a kid, pulling levers in the control cabin, controlling with a touch of my hand, the power of sixty horses—bucking and groaning as the buckets clawed at the hard pan and came up the ladder out of the slime like a gigantic serpent, sometimes with a tree trunk nipped between the buckets like a bone in its jaws.

The rains were exceptionally heavy that year. It meant that the white crew, coming in to take over the dredge, would be bogged down somewhere between Windhoek and Impumbi for two months at least. To pass the time, and to make it pay, I began dredging with my Ovambo crew.

I was chewing into the soft top-soil along the bank of the river when the trouble started. Whenever the machine was working I had a couple of Ovambos posted forward, one on each side of the bucket ladder. Their job was to watch for roots small enough to escape my attention and jam the machinery.

The morning sun had come out from behind black clouds. A miasmic mist swirled around the control cabin high up in the super-structure. I was leaning half

out of one of the windows but couldn't see the boys forward. Suddenly one of them let out a piercing scream. It had the shrill note of mortal terror in it, and it reached my ears above the grinding roar of the dredge. I thought he'd got caught in one of the buckets. I stopped the machinery, climbed down from the cabin and raced forward.

By the time I got there the native crew had gathered around the ladder. They stood staring down into one of the buckets with their eyes as big as saucers. I shoved my way through them. When I saw what held them spellbound, I gasped and my mouth wouldn't shut. A human skull was grinning up at me; the ribs were there, too; and, as the mud oozed out of the bucket, the metal of an uncommonly large-bladed spear was revealed.

One of the Ovambos pointed at the spear and screamed something that sounded like:*"Kendi ikoke*—Bunyoyo!"

"Ah-h-h . . .!" the others wailed in chorus.

Then panic struck them. Inside of fifteen minutes, I don't think there was an Ovambo within two miles of the dredge.

It didn't take me long to figure it out. With all the river before me, I had chosen to dig in the Ovambos' secret graveyard. Worse than that, I had dredged up old Bunyoyo's bones—opened a veritable Pandora's box and calamity was on the loose. Those cursed bones! As I looked down on them, I felt something cold running down my spine. Hair-raising tales of primitive African vengeance flashed across my mind. Awareness of my isolation came with the force of a blow.

Feeling like a man doomed, I went to the boiler-room and raked out the fires. By the time I had finished, a drum was throbbing in the distance. It was answered by another, then another—war drums! I was sure of it! The Ovambos were on the war path and they were all after *me!*

WHEN I came out on deck the drums had stopped. Everything was as still as death. Fear . . . the sweat oozed out of me. The worst was the feeling of utter loneliness. There was no help—I thought of Devenny. If only I could get to him before *they* got to me! I ran to my hut, grabbed up my rifle and a handful of cartridges and then raced to the thorn-bush bomba where my horse was grazing. But the damned beast wanted to play! She'd let me get within a few feet of her, then kick up her heels and go galloping around the bomba. When at last I caught her, the blood was pounding in my ears and I was close to sobbing when I swung into the saddle.

Lord! I rode that nag until my teeth chattered and her bones rattled. I thundered into Impumbi in the full blaze of noontide and a cloud of dust.

Devenny and his boy came running out to meet me. Devenny looked at my sweating mount with a shocked expression on his face. Stiff and saddle-sore, I almost fell into his arms as I dismounted.

"My dear fellow, you look ghastly! Whatever—"

"I dug him up, Devenny!" I gasped.

"Dug him up . . .?" He gave me a startled look. "Look here, you haven't been going around without your helmet, Rhys?"

"No, no! Bunyoyo—I dredged up his bones!"

"Well, I'll be damned! But take it easy, old chap! You really are upset and—"

"Devenny!" I caught his arm and shook it. "If you give me any of your British calm, I'll slug you, so help me! Don't *you* understand? They're after me—the Ovambos! Didn't you hear the drums? I want to get out of this alive. If you can't help me, say so and I'll take my chances alone."

He stood staring at me while the light of intelligence slowly dawned in his eyes. "The drums—of course!" said he, slowly. "I see what you mean—sacrilege, tribal vengeance and all that sort of thing. My dear fellow, that *is* bad!"

"I've only been in Africa a few months but it didn't take me quite so long to get the idea," said I. I was disappointed in Devenny, and it had a good effect on my nerves. It looked as if I would have to think for myself.

"Juma!" Devenny called his boy and spoke to him rapidly in some native dialect. Juma ran for the stable.

"Let's have a beer." Devenny took my arm and led me inside.

"Well, what's to be done?" I demanded, while he served the beer.

He looked at me thoughtfully for a

moment. "I'd like to have a chat with Solomen Benzuli. He's chief in this district—a nominal Christian and quite reasonable. His kraal is about two hours' ride southeast. As soon as you feel equal to it, we'll ride over to the kraal. I sent Juma in advance to announce us. Can't overlook formalities, you know."

My mouth sagged open. "You're crazy!" I gasped.

The hard glint that came into his eyes startled me. It was as if he had taken off a mask and I looked into the face of the real man for the first time.

"What do you want me to do, Rhys?" he asked. "Send for help, risk other men's lives to save your own?"

Well, I couldn't take that! I got myself in hand and said, with what I hoped was calm dignity, "If that's the way it is, I'm ready to ride when you are."

"My dear fellow, I never doubted it for a moment!"

And that damned silly grin was back on his face.

WE RODE in silence, Devenny in the lead. Our road was a dried river bed twisting through a fringe of mopani forest, then out onto the burning veldt again where the loose gravel rattled under the horses' hoofs. There were huge pillars of red rock, fretted into fantastic shapes by erosion. In the distance the sear, harsh lines of the Kookovelds were softened, wrapped in a veil of luminous mist.

Suddenly Devenny drew rein. "You don't know much about native customs, do you, Rhys?" he asked as I came abreast of him.

I shook my head. "And I don't want to hear about them just now."

"Quite so. But it's the witch doctors we've got to worry about. They'll smell you out and—"

"You can pass over the details," I said with an involuntary shudder.

"I just wanted to say that I've thought out a way of beating the ruddy wizards at their own game."

"I hope it works," I said dubiously.

He placed his hand on my shoulder. "One more thing, Rhys. You're doing the pluckiest thing I've ever heard of!"

"I don't feel that way. Besides, I'm following you."

"But I don't think the Ovambos are after me," said he.

We cantered on.

Benzuli's kraal stood by the shining plaque of the Etosha Swamp. It was a large collection of beehive huts surrounded by a high stockade about one hundred yards in diameter.

I found the approach depressing. There was a midden not far to windward; the stench was terrific. And the acrid patches of sand were dotted with the skulls and bones of game, whitened by years of burning in the sun.

We rode in through a labyrinth of sharp pointed stakes, as thick as a man's leg, cunningly placed to trap an attacking force, and came out into a large, circular compound.

Solomen Benzuli received us before the door of his mud-walled beehive, backed up by his head men and warriors. He was a truly majestic figure, all rigged out in a scarlet sash with gold tassels and a white robe or shirt that contrasted nicely with the black sheen of his fat legs.

The young warriors made an imposing array, standing in a close-packed mass, their legs painted up to the knees with red ochre; their leaf-bladed spears butted to the ground, painted shields resting against them.

The witch doctors stood apart; a weird group, like something conjured up by delirium tremens—horned head-dresses, hideous masks, necklets and girdles of human bones that rattled whenever they moved. The way they jabbered and pointed at me didn't make me feel happy. I figured they were out to give me the works. If they had their way, I thought, *my* knuckle bones would be dangling around their pot-bellies before long. And, if Devenny hadn't been holding my bridle, waiting for me to dismount, I'd have turned tail and ridden out, hell for leather!

Someone brought stools for us to sit on.

"Ah-h-!" said Solomen as we sat down.

"Ha-a-a!" replied Devenny, letting his gaze travel over the gathering and come to rest on the witch doctors who fidgeted uneasily under his frown.

It surprised me to learn how much conversation between White and Black is carried on by expressive ejaculations. A simple *"Ah"* with tonal inflections like

the Chinese and accompanied by an appropriate facial expression, can say more than a dozen sentences. As I sat there in the baking sun with my nerves as taut as piano wire, something of what followed, the overtones at least, became intelligible to me.

Solomen rose, made a long speech and then sat down.

"Ha!" Devenny snorted contemptuously and looked sternly at the young warriors.

A long-drawn *"Ah-h-h"* ran through their ranks. They looked shame-faced.

Then Devenny made a long speech. He did not rise, the white man's prestige, I supposed.

"Ah-h-h- Ha!" explained the witch doctors in chorus and their hostility plunged into my consciousness like a dozen spears. I could feel their eyes glaring at me through the slits of their masks.

"Ugh!" said Devenny, his face twisting into a grimace of disgust.

One by one they wilted under his cold stare as he singled them out and effaced themselves among the crowd.

Solomen was smiling; he rose, evidently speaking to me.

"He likes your words, old chap." Devenny translated. "He thinks you will do his people much good. He thanks you for your promise."

"What did I promise?"

"Explain later." He turned to address Solomen.

LAUGHTER came when he had finished—a great burst of it that subsided gradually into little, chuckling eddies. All eyes were upon me, dark faces beaming, white teeth flashing—evidently I was a very witty fellow. I rose, and bowed and smiled like a politician.

Solomen clapped his hands. Firm-breasted girls with swaying hips and coquettish smiles came in answer, bearing gourds of honey beer. It was vile-tasting stuff, but I drank it greedily. What with the heat and the sudden release from nervous tension that came with the realization that Devenny had somehow brought about an amicable settlement, I could have swallowed a gallon of it. As for Devenny—well, right then, I came as close to making an idol of him as one man can of another. I'd have waltzed around the compound with old Bunyoyo's skeleton itself, if he had said it was the right thing to do.

When we had a respectable distance between us and the kraal, I cantered up to Devenny's side.

"You're a wizard!" I said warmly. "How did you do it? What did you tell 'em?"

He made a wry face as he turned to face me. "I don't think you're going to like it, Rhys," said he.

I put my hand on his shoulder. "You saved my life, Devenny, and—"

"My dear fellow!" He shifted uncomfortably in his saddle. "Don't go off the deep end! I never said—"

I laughed. "All right, Sergeant! I won't slobber over you. What have I got to do?"

"You'll have to bury old Bunyoyo for one thing."

"O.K.! I'll use the dredge. Set him down on hard-pan, and may he rest in peace!"

"I'm afraid that won't do," said Devenny slowly. "You'll have to bury him in the dam."

"The dam! Oh Lord— Devenny, you didn't—yes, you did! You bought them off by promising 'em I'd build that dam!"

He spread his hands helplessly. "What else could I do? Let me explain, old chap. You see what makes sense for us doesn't make sense for them. The witch doctors claimed that Bunyoyo's ghost was on the rampage, no end to the trouble he'd bring upon the Ovambos. I had to keep a jump ahead of them and I had to make sense for the Ovambos. I told 'em that there was more magic in your little finger than there was in all the witch doctors rolled together. I said that Bunyoyo's ghost would obey you—that with his spirit, you could make a wall strong enough to hold back the river and make the corn to grow where nothing could be grown before. My dear chap, it stumped the witch doctors! They didn't like it. But Solomen and the head men were all for you. There's a good deal of rivalry between Solomen and his witch doctors. He'd like to see the crafty blighters shown up."

"I can guess what would happen, if I were to disappoint him," said I, gloomily.

Well, I thought it wouldn't be such a tough job. I could use the dredge and the pumps. And, after all, I had let all the devils out of hell loose upon the Ovam-

bos. From their point of view it was reasonable compensation or atonement, or whatever they thought it was. It did flash across my mind just then that something smelled and I gave Devenny a sharp look; but he met my scrutiny with an artless smile.

"Something bothering you, old chap?" Devenny prompted.

"Never mind," I said. "I'll start work tomorrow. It's up to you to get the labor."

IT TOOK us two months to build the dam and it was hard work. The reservoir was easy. The Ovambos, men and women, in an endless singing chain, carried the muck away in little baskets in less time than I would have believed possible. The embankments gave us the trouble. They had to be brought up in thin layers carefully, punned and rolled. With the passing of the rainy season, the sun blazed out of a clear sky; the baked clay cracked, increasing the risk of slip and I had to introduce berms to get the required stability. It's a simple technique—nothing to it when you've got a gang of experienced muckers who'll do just what you tell them. But with native labor there's only one way—wade in and show 'em.

Without Devenny I couldn't have done it. He was as good as ten men. He wanted the dam; it was his dream. *He* could work up to his neck in mud all day, laughing and singing with the Ovambos, urging them on. As for me, I hadn't sweated my way through college with mucking in mind, and that all for love.

Pumping out the central puddle-ditch ready for the fill was the final step. It was a gala day. The Ovambos turned out *en masse* and marched to the dam site to the wail of horns and the rumble of drums.

Solomen came first with his head men; then the witch doctors, in full regalia, bearing Bunyoyo's bones in a large woven basket. They were followed by the warriors and, straggling behind, the old men, women and children.

Devenny and I were standing at the brink of the puddle-ditch. The warriors formed a semi-circle around us, a bulwark against the pressure of the crowd eager to see what was going on within the charmed circle.

Solomen saluted us. The drums throbbed in lively rhythm. The witch doctors dashed into the cleared space and executed a weird dance. The red dust rose from the baked clay, mingled with the rancid stench of palm-oil and sweating bodies, and made breathing a kind of agony.

While the witch doctors danced, the warriors chanted a tuneless refrain over and over again. Devenny said it was a song in my and Bunyoyo's honor, and that it went something like this:

"Great is the Builder,
The white wizard.
Strong is his wisdom
Great is Bunyoyo, the war chief,
the earth shaker.
Great is his spirit,
To hold back the water!"

Suddenly the drums ceased. One of the witch doctors picked up the basket and solemnly deposited the bones at my feet.

Solomen Benzuli spoke. Devenny nodded and turned to me.

"They want you to do the honors," he translated with a twinkle in his blue eyes. "Say a few words over the bones, like a good fellow. Make it impressive."

Well, we of the Rhys clan are nothing if not versatile. My school days weren't far behind me then, and I'd done some work in college dramatics. People said I was good at it and I fancied my style. I suppose looking down at those damned bones at my feet must have started some kind of a reflex. Before I knew it, I was giving them Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,* in my best histrionic style.

I got as far as—"Hands, that the rod of empire—" when the expression on Devenny's face stopped me. His eyes were bulging and he was gasping for breath. I thought it was the heat, but suddenly he squatted down on his haunches with his face buried in his arms. His shoulders shook with suppressed laughter.

"Ah-h-h-!" The Ovambos gave tongue to a long-drawn wail of heartfelt sympathy. Apparently, they thought he was weeping.

"Devenny!" I hissed at him. "Stop, you ass! You'll ruin everything!"

"Couldn't," he gasped. "You—Rhys,

you're priceless, oh—" He went off into another paroxysm.

There was silence. Everyone was looking at us. There was a puzzled frown on Solomen's face. I was mad enough to hit Devenny. I thought the words were appropriate and I couldn't see what was so damned funny.

Finally, Devenny got to his feet and managed to keep his face straight while Bunyoyo was decently interred. Lord, but I was glad to see the last of those damned bones!

We filled in and opened the sluices. The water rushed and gurgled down the canals, spreading the life-giving silt over the plain.

ON THE following morning a truck came to Impumbi with the dredge gang. At sunset I was ready to go out with it. Solomen Benzuli and Devenny were there to see me on my way.

"You have done much good. We will never forget you!" Devenny translated Solomen's farewell as we clasped hands firmly.

"Ask him what he would have done if you hadn't thought of the dam, Devenny." I laughed.

Devenny gave me a startled look.

"Go on, ask him!" I urged.

The truck's engine roared, I climbed on board. "I want to tell my grandchildren. What would he have done?" I yelled above the roaring engine.

"Hope you've got grandchildren before you find that out!" His answering shout reached me as we pulled out. "Good-bye, old fellow! You've got more guts than a million—and you'll never forget *me!*"

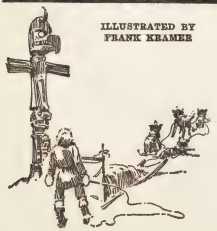
When I did find out, there was a lot of territory between Devenny and me. It was lucky for him that there was—I'd have shot him on sight, so help me! Revelation came in the person of the Native Commissioner a week after I arrived back at Windhoek. He came to my hotel room and he had Devenny's report on what he called the "Impumbi mess" with him.

As he read the report to me it became clear that the Ovambos had been about to run away *from* me, not *at* me. It appeared that they would have pulled up stakes, moved their village miles away, rather than run the risk of meeting Bunyoyo's ghost after dark—a fatal encounter which, in their view, was likely to befall any man walking the familiar trails after I had disturbed the old warrior's rest. In fact, it had taken all of Devenny's ingenuity and Solomon Benzuli's authority to stop a stampede clean across the Portuguese border.

The Commissioner thanked me warmly for my "splendid co-operation," which he evidently thought had sprung from the promptings of a noble and generous soul. I did not disillusion him; laughter, the merest twinkling of an eye, would have meant bloodshed just then.

Well, it's years ago now, and, after all, it takes a good man to meet a crisis like that and get a dam out of it at the same time. I hope the plain is just as Devenny saw it in his dream—"an Elysian field, quite!"

FLIGHT FROM NOME



ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK KRAMER

Lights started coming on in the cottages. The women knew what this emergency landing meant.

By FRANK RICHARDSON PIERCE

DANNY REAGAN heard Joe Lynch's voice, distant and annoyed, "Danny! Wake up! Snap out of it!" Danny struggled through the fog and confusion that lies between a bad dream and complete wakefulness. He blinked stupidly, and slowly the familiar pattern of their room took form—the clock on the little table, the larger table with his collection of ivory carvings gathered in remote Eskimo villages, his rifle standing in the corner, and his parka carelessly flung over a chair. It was noon, and the flight from Nome to Anchorage wasn't scheduled until seven o'clock. Plenty of time to sleep *if* he could get to sleep again. He turned over, closed his eyes, and tried to relax a body that was tense and drenched with a cold sweat because of a nightmare that was so real he wasn't really sure, even now, that he had survived a bad crash.

Joe Lynch, leaning on his elbow, regarded him curiously. "I didn't know whether you were dreaming or choking to death."

"I was dreaming the tanks were about empty," Danny answered. "You were trying to set the plane down, and suddenly I saw a ridge, dead ahead. I was trying

to yell a warning, but couldn't speak above a whisper."

"And didn't you try to take over?" Joe asked.

"*Me* take over when *you're* riding the left hand side?" Danny angrily retorted. "Hell no!"

"I've sometimes wondered," Joe said, trying to make his voice casual—and failing. He reached for his cigarettes, then the lighter on the little stand between the twin beds.

The Joe Lynch-Danny Reagan flying team was rated the best in Alaska, but the two men hadn't been getting on well lately. Neither wanted to admit it. Neither confessed its possibility by the slightest change in attitude, but there was a tenseness in their relationship since they had been discharged from the flying corps and resumed civilian flying for the Alaska-Asiatic Airlines.

Pre-war Joe had been a pretty swell guy. In those days the Civil Aeronautics Administration had just ventured into Alaska and flying was mostly by contact. The AAA's equipment was little more than motorized egg crates. Joe Lynch, a kid with instrument pilot training, had come to Alaska and hit the AAA for a job, only to learn that a good bush pilot packed more weight in the Arctic than an instrument man. He had found himself co-piloting for Danny Reagan, another kid.

A silly situation, Joe had thought, but not half as silly as falling in love with Danny's sister, Maureen. Maureen was only twelve at the time, and Joe wondered how old a girl had to be to avoid the "child bride" rating.

"Piloting in Alaska is simple," Danny had said. "Afloat you keep your ship off the beach, uncharted reefs and pinnacle rocks. Aloft you keep your ship away from the clouds that are full of rocks. Few weather reports, so you get up in the morning, listen to the sounds and chart your own weather. If whistles, bells and Malemute howls are unusually clear—it means rain. You look at the ceiling. If there's a hole big enough to get through, you take off and go through it, thus avoiding icing your wings. You look for a hole somewhere near your destination and come through.

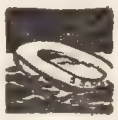
"Beams? No! You fly from a camp, follow a creek until you come to Flapjack Meehan's roadhouse. Then you turn and go on to a mountain with an Indian's profile," Danny explained. "Twenty miles beyond you sight a cabin where George Washington stayed all night—if George had stayed in Alaska. From there you go to Gunsight Pass. If the wind has more soup than your motors, you back out."

"Back out!" Joe had explained in shocked tones.

"Yeah," Danny had answered. "Keep your plane flying at something above stalling speed, and the gale will blow you backwards."

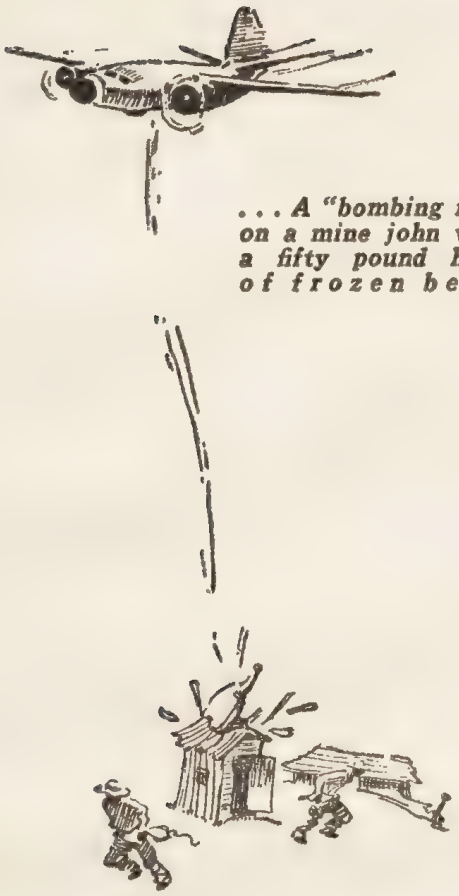
And gradually Joe had become a bush pilot. Sometimes they would fly in a load of dynamite to a mine, and Joe would hold the percussion caps on his lap, ready to toss them out the window if the landing looked bad. Powder would stand a rough landing, but the combination was bad.

Or they would make a "bombing run" on a mine john and knock off the roof with a fifty pound hunk of frozen beef. It was fun to come suddenly on a camp and see the honest miners burst from the john and race for cover, clutching their pants. Now and then one would lose his grip, move a few yards like a hobbled horse, then bite the dust, or the snow, depending on the weather. And Joe and Danny would laugh. Often Joe would slap Danny between the shoulders after a particularly tough trip and exclaim, "Danny, do you think pilots will *ever* be more than glorified truck drivers?"



EARLY-DAY travel in Alaska was hazardous and many an unknown reef won a name and a place on charts because a ship's bottom discovered it. Gradually ships and masters built up "safe" reputations—ships like the venerable *Victoria*, and masters like Dynamite Johnny O'-Brien. Men sending their families Outside, and sick or old people preferred them.

Because they usually brought their passengers safely through with a minimum of discomfort and risk, Joe and Danny had picked up a reputation for being safe pilots. They flew young women to the hospitals, then flew them home with new babies, cribs, formulas and other infant gear. Their mercy flights made the headlines. They read the glowing reports and



. . . A "bombing run" on a mine john with a fifty pound hunk of frozen beef.

shook their heads, as Arctic pilots do, because imaginative writers had confused the words routine and bravery.

With the CAA gradually expanding in Alaska, Danny had seen the handwriting on the wall and traded places with Joe who taught him the intricacies of instrument flying.

Maureen went Outside to school, returning each summer. Danny was happy the day she and Joe became engaged. He lived for Maureen. No one else counted the way she did, not even himself. This devotion puzzled strangers. They thought, for instance, that he should have his own ship instead of flying on the right hand side for a prospective brother-in-law. They didn't know that Danny couldn't be happy until Maureen's happiness was assured—and that meant staying close to Joe for the time being.

Strangers didn't know about Jack and Molly Reagan sailing from Nome with Danny and the baby Maureen that grim fall when winter came ahead of time; nor the spray freezing until the steamer was a ghost ship; nor the pinnacle rock that stabbed deep into the ship, breaking her back.

Danny had never forgotten it; Mom was insisting that he take a nap and he wanted to watch Dad play cards in the smoking room. He could hear the moaning and groaning of the ship in her agony; the grinding and rasp as frames and plates gave way under the strain; and Mom, deathly white, but working with steady hands as she dressed him in his warmest clothing, then buttoned a slicker around him. He could hear Dad's voice saying, "Unlock the door, Molly!" And Mom answering, "It's jammed, Jack. Hurry around to the porthole and take the children."

He remembered the shouts and thud of running feet, then Dad was saying, "Pass Danny through first, Molly." He remembered the tenseness of Mom's arms as she held him, kissed him, then lifted him to the porthole and said, "Make yourself stiff as a ramrod, Danny." And Dad had drawn him to the narrow deck and hastily strapped a life belt marked *CHILDREN* about him. He had drawn Maureen through the porthole and hurried to the boat deck. Danny had followed.

An officer was saying, "Women and children first." And Dad had said, "Here are two." Then he had put Danny onto the amidships thwart between two young women with children, and he had said, "Take care of Maureen, son . . . always. Take care of Maureen." And those words had changed a little, skinny guy's sense of responsibility to that of a man's.

Then Dad had said, "I'm going back for Mom."

The little, skinny guy who was hardly more than a baby himself, sat quietly in the boat and watched the men beat the boat falls with clubs to clear them of ice so they would run freely through the blocks. He remembered the waves licking at the lifeboat with curling, damp tongues, then clawing at it, tossing it about and drenching the occupants with spray.

He saw the spray freeze on his slicker and on the rubber blanket Mom had wrapped about Maureen. His arms had ached, but he held her tightly, yet gently as Mom had taught him to do. After awhile his arms no longer ached because

the clothing about them was frozen, and frost had worked into the flesh. Hours later when a rescue craft took them aboard, his arms remained cradled. He remembered the big, rough man with the ruddy face who worked a long time, thawing and straightening his arms, and who kept saying softly, "Oh goddam!" He remembered, particularly, because Mom had warned him they were swear words and little boys never used them.

He remembered the tossing boats, and the stern half of the steamer, up-ending, then sinking. In later years his imagination completed a picture that none living had seen—of Dad trying to batter down the jammed door in time and of Mom quietly waiting. Danny had a clear picture of his father's face as he said, "Take care of Maureen, son . . . always." As if he were thinking, I know this skinny little guy's breed. I'm not coming back. He won't fail me.

Dad's faith had been an enduring flame through boyhood and young manhood, and it had sustained Danny. It wasn't difficult for him to put aside his own plans in the process of taking care of Maureen. It was a work of love. He never interfered and never preached, but remedied things needing attention, working quietly from the sidelines.

DANNY blamed the war on the present tenseness between Joe and himself. It had changed Joe, but not as it had changed some men and was supposed to have changed many more. Sixty bombing missions without losing a man and seldom returning with plane damage had convinced Joe that he was lucky. Some rather high "brass" believed it, too, and for that reason Joe had been sent on the toughest missions.

Flak, unaccountably, was too high or too low. Overtaking attack planes were usually almost out of ammunition or fuel. When hard pressed, friendly clouds formed and received Joe's plane with open arms. And toward the last Danny noticed that Joe was beginning to like the "Lucky Lynch" legend that was going the rounds. He was beginning to lean on it.

That was why Danny had turned down a plane of his own. It might be a good idea if he were around when Joe's luck ran out. The "brass" hadn't urged too strongly because it did seem a shame to break up a winning team and change good luck to bad.

But nothing happened that good mechanics couldn't repair in a few hours. After that, there were the medals, the bond tours, and endless dinners with chambers of commerce chairman rapping for order and beginning, "We have with us this evening, a man . . ."

And the man was invariably Joe Lynch. Seated among the sub-chairmen was Danny Reagan, nervously toying with a fork, thinking of post-war flying in Alaska and getting his knees and feet straightened out so that he wouldn't wreck the table when he stood up for his bow.

Along the way, there were sultry, hero-worshipping numbers with come-hither expressions in their eyes and Joe had gone hither and perhaps thither. Danny didn't exactly blame Joe. There had been a war, hadn't there, and the girl had thrown herself at him, hadn't she?

Nome had its newsreels and there would be shots of Joe up to his ears in adoring lovelies. Maureen would see them, but she would sensibly take a long haul view of things and try not to let her heart ache.

But sometimes it got Danny down. Then he would buy a bottle of whiskey, retire to his room where he couldn't become a pain in some worthy stranger's neck, and get good and tight.

The war's end should have cleared up everything, but it hadn't. Joe hadn't forgotten he was Lucky Lynch. He had taken a couple of chances—nothing really serious—but it revealed a tendency that Danny considered significant. The tricky, vile weather that brewed bad medicine for man-made birds perhaps hadn't heard of Joe's luck.

That was what worried Danny and gave him nightmares while Joe's sleep was untroubled. Now as Joe leaned on his elbow and studied Danny curiously he asked, "Normally you sleep like a log. What's the reason for these nightmares? Are you in love with that little CAA dish at Cold Deck?"

So Joe had noticed that. Danny had fallen in love with her voice first as it came over the air, reporting weather conditions. And for several weeks he had refused to wander into the station because

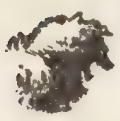
he had built her up into something very special in his mind and didn't want to be disappointed. When he finally met her he wasn't the least bit disappointed.

In turn, Danny's voice had intrigued her. She came just to his shoulder, which was higher than most shoulders and her heart told her here was the man she had been waiting for. Danny began making tentative, long-term schedules in which she figured prominently.

Now as Joe smoked and studied him through the haze, Danny thought, If he knows I'm that way over Nancy, why does he turn on the old personality whenever he's within gunshot of her? Is the damned fool through with Maureen, or is he just throwing his weight around? He was conscious of a slow burn, but he kept his temper. He said, "Answering your question—loving Nancy wouldn't give a guy bad dreams."

He lit a cigarette, thinking, It was a grisly dream, but I think I'll give it to him, uncensored, because it could happen just that way to us. It might sober him. Danny said, "It was a granite ridge armored with thick ice. When the motors hit, they splattered like molten lead. The starboard wing sheared off, stabbed into a snow bank and stood there—a marker for the search planes. The port wing and fuselage were reduced to numerous, odd-shaped pieces of junk; and the people—clay fragments. The cliff blazed briefly from the little gasoline remaining in the shattered tanks. Then it was all quiet—and millions of snowflakes hurried in to cover the sickening mess. The point I can't get is, that all this should register in a dream when obviously I was one of the first killed."

Joe finished his cigarette and observed, "Quite a dream." Then he bounced his big, solid figure about until he was comfortable. In less than a minute he was sleeping soundly.



DANNY tried to relax. He closed his eyes and counted salmon going over a waterfall. No luck. He thought, savagely, Joe's flown so many bomb loads that he's lost the human factor. To him a load is a load whether humanity or bombs—so many pounds per square foot of wing surface. I should quit and save my own skin. No, can't do that. He's the better instrument man. I'm the better bush pilot. I might be needed. Besides, there's Maureen. I've got to string with Joe, and like it, until they marry or call it off. And her heart will never call it off, but pride will do it in a hurry. We're a proud breed and pride exacts a stiff price at times.

He relaxed again and closed his eyes and tried to think of the mercy flights, but memory conjured only tragic pictures—the Russian pilot coming suddenly onto the Nome radio towers, throwing his plane perpendicular and passing cleaning between them, only to crash. The friend who radioed, "Only God knows where I am. I'm going down and I'll leave everything to Him." He found the wreckage. Danny was sure that He had taken care of everything because his friend was a good man.

He thought of the Army pilot blown from a bomber. The man had a confused idea that he was on the ground and wondered how he got there. But he pulled the rip cord and found himself thousands of feet above snowy mountains. That turned out O. K., and Danny smiled faintly, but it didn't bring sleep. He couldn't get today's flight from Nome to Anchorage out of his mind.

He got up, walked to the window and looked at the weather—plenty of ceiling and visibility. Gray clouds were spitting snow particles indifferently, like a tired man raking leaves. The weather wasn't bad. It wasn't bad at all. The street scene was normal—drifts against the above-ground watermains, drained for the winter; a few sled dogs sniffing about, seemingly cold and miserable, but they weren't. The "Honey Wagon" as sourdough humor called it, making its faithful rounds because Nome has no sewer system. An Eskimo girl giggling shyly.

He heard the door downstairs close softly and saw Maureen walking briskly down the street. Her parka hood framed a face that was full of warmth, sympathy and courage. He thought, Joe, you damned fool, you'd better wake up before it's too late. Lose her and you've lost something your life will never again know.

The Eskimo girl and two dogs joined Maureen and he heard the native girl's giggle and his sister's soft laughter. He sat down in his favorite chair and looked

The Eskimo girl and two dogs joined Maureen and he heard the native girl's giggle and his sister's soft laughter.

at the ivory carvings that Maureen periodically dusted and rearranged. Most of them were collectors' items from remote Arctic and Bering Sea islands where trade goods were more important than money.

There were thirty-odd ivory birds—carved from walrus tusks by the Saint Lawrence islanders. He could tell Maureen's moods by the bird patterns. Instead of doodling with pad and pencil, she doodled with the birds. Sometimes the ducks would be in one group, the geese in another, and the other types in a third. Often they were in groups of four couples each, as if ready for a square dance. Sometimes they were lined up like soldiers. Again they formed a circle, heads toward

the center as if in grave conference. Today they were in V formation.

Danny was beginning to doze, when he sat up with a jerk. V formation headed south, he thought. So she's heard about Joe's interest in Nancy and she's answering her pride instead of heart? That's the right answer, the only answer when you live in a small place like Nome.

There was an extension into the room, but Danny went downstairs to the telephone and called the AAA office. "Johnny, who's booked for Anchorage tonight?" He thought, It'll be the usual women and children because the "safe" pilots will be up front. His face was hard and bitter now.

Johnny's voice came back clearly, "You know the company's creed, 'The Safest Way Is To Fly AAA.' It's paying better dividends since Lynch and Reagan are back. Big Kate, the dance hall queen, is going Outside to see her granddaughters. Mary McGee, and ten months old son, Butch—going Outside to see her folks."

Danny caught his breath sharply. Once the Nome Nugget had said, "Jack and Molly Reagan are taking their youngsters, Danny and Maureen Outside to visit the youngsters' two sets of grandparents." He said, "Go on, Johnny."

"Father Carney is booked," Johnny continued. "Pete Remke, deputy United States marshal, is taking Old Man Kent Out. As the sourdoughs so quaintly put it, the old man has 'missed too many boats.' In other words he's stayed up here too long and gone nuts. Chuck and Honey Martin are booked. They're breaking up after trying marriage about a year. Too bad. He's the one-woman type, and she's the woman."

"Who else?" Danny's voice had risen slightly, and carried a critical, demanding note.

"Mrs. Dowling is expecting a baby 'most any time now. She's going Out."

"Oh brother!" Danny groaned. "There would be an expectant woman."

"What's that, Danny?"

"Skip it," Danny answered. "Who else?"

"That's just about a load because we're shipping out ivory and furs," Johnny answered.

"Quit ducking, Johnny. Is Maureen booked?"

"Yeah. She wanted to surprise you, I think. Her bags are already at the airport," Johnny said. "She wanted to leave quietly. Didn't want anyone to know. She'll give me hell."

"Maureen doesn't peddle much hell and you know it," Danny said. "Thanks, Johnny. The usual flight plan, I suppose?"

"Yeah . . . Moses Point, Unalakleet, McGrath, Farewell and Anchorage," Johnny answered.

"By the way, Johnny, cancel Maureen's reservation."

Johnny didn't answer for several seconds. "If we had television, you'd see me shrugging my shoulders in a resigned, beaten sort of way. The reservation is checked off."

Danny hung up, went back to the bedroom and began dressing. Joe opened a resentful eye. "What is it this time, another crash or just sleep-walking?"

Danny counted ten. Then ten more, and managed not to blow a fuse—no mean achievement considering his Irish blood and present mood. "Can't sleep," he answered briefly. "I'm going out for a walk."

He remembered to put on his Saint Christopher's medal. He tucked his rabbit's foot into a convenient pocket. The four leaf clover was in his bill fold. My common sense tells me this is rather foolish, he thought, but I feel a little easier when the chips are down—like a girl with mad money.

CHAPTER II

HEADING FOR TROUBLE

DANNY met Maureen coming out of the airline office. He knew by the puzzled expression that she had learned of the cancellation. Through the window, he could see Johnny pretending to be full of business. He could see the blackboard on the wall with its familiar:

THE MALEMUTE

Pilot ..... *Joe Lynch*
Co-pilot ..... *Dan Reagan*
Leaves ..... *7:00 P.M.*

"Let's walk, Maureen," he said. He gave the giggling native girl a quiet glance

and she giggled and crossed the street. The dogs followed along.

"Why did you cancel my reservation, Danny?" she asked. She had always been that way, never barging in swinging, but striving to find out the score, then governing her actions accordingly. But he could see in his sister much of his own tenseness. He didn't know exactly how to explain the situation, and she said, "So much of the time it has been us two against the world. We always pull together, so there must be a reason. If it is a good one, Danny, it's O.K. to cancel. But . . ." She drew a deep breath and a little catch in her voice told him that she was close to tears. "People are beginning to feel sorry for me. That . . . I can't take. I hadn't wanted to bother you . . ."

"I've seen it," he said. "Joe needs a good sock on the jaw. Not necessarily with a fist, though I've considered that, too. His head is in the clouds and I've been hoping that he would come down to earth and quit riding his good luck. No dice. Now I'm afraid he'll come down to earth and take a plane load of people with him. It's silly, but try to understand. Call it presentiment, hunch or the logical result of a man getting off the beam. I feel that Joe's heading for trouble. I don't want you along."

"What can you do?" she asked.

"I can't walk into AAA's flight operations office and say, 'Cancel today's flight from Nome, I think we're going to crack up,' " he replied. "They'd think I'd gone nuts, like Old Man Kent. But I can keep you out of a potential crash. Listen, Maureen, let's have it cold turkey. Do you think I'm suffering from belated war neurosis?"

"It's all very real to you," she said. She looked at him curiously, intently, as if she hadn't taken a real look at her brother since his return, which was not true. "And your feet are on the ground. Why don't you lay off a few trips? Or, better still, accept one of the planes the AAA has offered you." She thought a moment. "No, of course you wouldn't do that. If something did go wrong, you'd always have a sense of guilt—the conviction that if you had stuck, you might have averted trouble. But, seriously, Danny, I don't feel—can't believe—that your hunch is coming true. It's your Irish superstition."

"Still . . . I hope you won't go on today's flight," he said.

"I won't, Danny, if you don't want me to," she said. "And another thing, you've carried the ball for me long enough and postponed your own affairs. I'm a big girl now . . . turn me loose." She smiled gently, hoping that he would understand. "I've met Nancy. She's lovely, sensible and sweet and that is super approval coming from a critical sister. I'll take tomorrow's plane."

"I think I'll go on to the hangar," he said, stopping at the AAA garage. "Be seeing you." He tried to make it casual, as if nothing could happen, and that he would see her in Anchorage the following day when she took a plane for the Outside. But he looked over his shoulder, and she was standing there, smiling rather sadly, as if she, too, felt today's flight was jinxed.

THE heating plant in the hangar had failed, and the plane's surfaces were covered with frost. He called a mechanic and they dragged a rope—seesawing—over the wings to clear it. After that he checked fuel and helped lash the freight. The Malemute was like the old *Victoria*—tested and found not wanting. She was a DC3 with bucket seats along each side and a cargo floor down the center. Like the CAA's King Chris, she had landed in places never intended for planes of her weight and speed. And like the Victoria, running at sea in her seventy-fifth year, she was beloved by Alaskans.

Jack Jefford, the CAA's chief pilot, came into the hangar. He had been a bush pilot before qualifying as an instrument man, and they spoke the same language. They hadn't had a good bull session since Danny's return. "Notice any changes up here, Danny?" he asked. He was like Danny, dark, with a nice smile and a manner that put others at ease.

"Yeah—you can fly instrument, all over the country," Danny answered. "And you fellows put emergency landing strips in spots I never dreamed of seeing them. It took a bit of doing."

"Yeah. Some of the stuff went over lakes and frozen tundra by cat train, but plenty was flown in," Jefford answered. "You know what the weather is like all

over the territory—which makes it easier."

"In the old days, you had to fly to your destination to find out whether there was visibility or ceiling on the ground," Danny said.

"Which brings me to this, Danny," Jefford said. "It's none of my business, but you're wound up like an eight day clock. Take it easy. You've gone through tougher situations than any that you'll ever know again up here. That's why I dropped in to mention CAA emergency strips and weather stations. There's a warm front moving in from the Pacific, but you should beat it to Anchorage with plenty to spare. I'm leaving at five o'clock, and except at McGrath, where it's snowing, I'll have good weather all the way. Maybe an hour's instrument weather over the mountains, but clear at Anchorage." He slapped Danny between the shoulders. "That's the stuff, boy, relax. Remember what we used to say in the old days?"

Danny grinned. "'It can go on like this for days, getting tougher and tougher, then things get worse.' Thanks for mentioning it, Jack. I'll buy you a drink in Anchorage."

He watched King Chris take off, then went back to the hangar. The telephone was ringing. It was Maureen and her voice was disturbing. "I'm home, Danny," she said. "Joe learned that I had made reservations, then cancelled them. He's furious. He said it was time the Reagan children grew up. He insists that if I have a common sense reason for not going out tonight, it is O.K. If not, it is something else again. In a way he has something on his side."

"No doubt of that," Danny answered. "That is, from his viewpoint. What do you want to do? Perhaps the episode has jolted some sense into his head. In that case there's no reason why you shouldn't go out with us."

"I'll surrender with dignity and graciousness," she told him. "You're always sweet about me, Danny. I'm afraid you've spoiled me badly."

Her buoyancy made him feel better. He thought, Maybe she'll change her mind at Anchorage. Joe can change it for her and not half try. Sometimes things can go on like this for days, getting tougher and tougher, then they get—better.

When Joe showed up at the airport, he was on a strictly formal basis. "She's ready to go," Danny reported.

"I'll file the flight plan," Joe said. "And make a last minute check on the weather. Have the Martins arrived yet? One of the charter jobs is flying them to Nome."

"No," Danny answered. "I understand they broke a ski in the take-off. They'll be an hour late."

"We'll wait," Joe said. "Martin is one of the line's heaviest shippers. Now, one more thing."

"Shoot!" Danny said briefly.

"We're not hitting it off," Joe said. "No sense in kidding ourselves. One of us is off the beam. I think it is you, and you think it is me. I'd like to take a sock at your jaw, and you'd like to swing at mine. Right?"

"Right!"

"But we aren't taking our personal feelings into the plane with us. They can be submerged," he continued sensibly. "If not, then we'd better quit and let another flying team take over. Right?"

"Right!"

They talked quietly, looking each other squarely in the eyes, but there was no friendliness.

DANNY went over to the waiting room where the passengers were gathering. Old Man Kent was standing with his back to the heater. He was slight and he wore a closely-cropped mustache which was snow white. His cheeks were pink and his eyes were bright and merry. He wasn't a dangerous patient—just a little old man who wandered off and couldn't find his way back.

"They're taking me Outside to cure me," he said. "I'll be back with the break-up and watch the ice go out of the Yukon again. Ain't missed a break-up since Ninety-eight. I know a creek where there's pay." He chuckled. "If I can get somebody to grubstake me, I'll strike pay next time, sure."

"Sure you will, Dad," the deputy marshal said agreeably. "They can't keep you oldtimers down."

"All I need is to be cured, and I'll be back. I ain't the man I used to be, but I know the game," Old Man Kent babbled on. "I was going over Chilkoot Pass. Solid line of men, climbing steps out in the ice.

If you stepped out of line you lost your place. Then the slide came. It caught a lot of good men. I dug my pardner out. A handsome, fine figger of a man. But hell on school teachers." He chuckled and nodded, then awakened with a jerk. "I've seen it all . . ."

"Sure you have, Dad," Pete Remke said.

"Knew Jack London. He put me in one of his books," Old Man Kent said. He blinked at Danny and asked, "Ain't you Danny Reagan?"

"That's my maiden name, Dad," Danny answered.

"Knew your folks well. Your ma was a fine figger of a woman," he said, dozing. "Knew 'em all, Jack London, Rex Beach . . . all of 'em. I was on the wharf in Skagway when Soapy Smith and Frank Reid shot each other."

"Sure you were," Pete Remke said, but he thought, Enough guys claim to have been on the wharf during the gun battle to collapse it.

"Knew 'em all, Soapy Smith, Jack London, Ham Grease Jimmy, Swiftwater Bill," Old Man Kent said. He chuckled happily. "I was with him when he took one look at the Miles Canyon waters. The Yukon turns over on its side there, it does. And Bill said, 'I guess I'll walk.' That's why they called him Swiftwater Bill. He cornered the egg market in Dawson, he did. He'd had a fight with his girl, and she liked eggs. She didn't get no eggs until she made peace with Bill. Oh I knew 'em all . . . Jack . . . " His chin dropped to his frail breast and he dozed, a little old man who had never struck it rich and never would. A little old man who had missed too many boats, but had helped develop the country while he was missing them.

A car drove up with skid chains slapping the fenders and stopped. A large woman stepped out and paid the driver who followed her into the waiting room with two pieces of smart airplane luggage. She spoke to no one because no one spoke to her . . . in public.

Old Man Kent, awakened by the blast of fresh air, blinked and whispered, "Big Kate, Pete. What a handsome woman she was in her prime. Mighty well preserved now. Five feet eleven she stood in her socks—slim ankles, but big calves. Broad hips, mighty broad hips, a slim waist and

"I knew 'em all," said Old Man Kent.

. . . a noble buzzum. And when she drew in a deep breath and let it out, it made a man think of home. Many's the good cry I've had in my beer. She sings alto. A fine figger of a woman. They don't make 'em any more I guess. The consumptive-looking critters they have nowadays, with their flat fronts, flat sterns and skinny legs would never've caught the eyes of the men of my day. I knew 'em all . . ."

Big Kate removed a Russian sable coat, because the room was warm, and tossed it over the back of a chair. It was an old coat, but one doesn't laugh lightly at sable's age, and Kate was conscious of quick gasps among the few women present. She had removed her diamond rings —huge stones of the finest quality and there were bands of white skin on her fingers where the rings had been. When visiting her granddaughters, Big Kate remembered the fitness of things, and there was no vulgar display of gems. The coat, too, worn for warmth and not for show, would go into storage in Seattle.

Her raven black hair was touched with gray, like frost on a charred log. In her face was a touch of hardness and the wisdom that comes from a profound knowledge of mankind. She had grubstaked many men, and a few had struck pay. She managed her financial affairs wisely and owed no man. She had the sourdough's affection for the old "Vic" and the Malemute.

THE Dowlings arrived a few minutes after Big Kate. Hank Dowling fussed over his wife as if she were a chick and he an old hen. He kept saying, "Don't slip on the ice! Be careful, Edith, don't let that door bump you." He kept a tight hold on her arm until she was seated in a comfortable chair, then he perched nearby.

Big Kate hardly glanced at them, but she thought, Another race between the Malemute and the storm. Why do they delay going to the hospital? There's nothing worries a pilot more than the possibility of midwifing en route.

"Ask anybody," Old Man Kent said, "and they'll tell you I knew 'em all—Jack London. He put me in a book. Tex Rickard. The little Doolittle boy who used to be around Nome turned out right well, I hear. Oh, I knew him too. General or something, isn't he?"

Father Carney came in quietly and set down his bag. He rubbed his hands briskly and held them toward the heater's warmth. His cheeks were ruddy and a shock of silver hair lent him distinction. He had a fine, deep voice and only a few years ago it was said that his was the best pair of mushing legs in the North. There were some, however, who argued that when the good father's legs played out, God took over. His shoulders were wide and thick. He was a man fitted for the rugged life he had led.

Sometimes he traveled by plane, sometimes by umiak or dog team, and occasionally by canoe or pole boat. Someone called him Padre of the Frosts. It was a good name.

Danny helped Mary McGee out of a cab and into the waiting room. Beneath her parka she wore a smartly tailored outfit, and she carried a brand new hat in a tricky box which dangled from a finger not previously assigned to hold her baby. Her hand bag hung from her wrist. She was harried, but smiling.

Her ten months old baby, Butch, greeted Danny with a smile and a lusty burp, which startled the youngster, momentarily. He was dressed in a blue parka. The hood was faced with a strip of ermine which went nicely with his black hair and eyes. His single tooth seemed to be in aimless quest. There was nothing for it to do, but it lent something to his smile.

"He's the healthiest thing I've seen in years," Danny said, but he thought, I wish he would cancel his space.

"We're going out to see his grandparents," Mary McGee said. "Aren't we Butch?" Butch burped, again looked startled, then smiled.

Danny thought, And years ago Jack and Molly Reagan and children started Outside to visit the children's grandparents.

"Ah, hello, Butch!" Father Carney exclaimed as they came into the waiting room.

Big Kate smiled for the first time at Butch, and she thought, I'd like to hold the little dickens. Then there was a momentary touch of sadness in her eyes. She resumed her normal expression—a poker face.

"Butch should be asleep," Mary McGee said, "but . . . too much excitement I guess. His formula doesn't seem to agree. He burps a lot after meals."

"Maybe so," Danny said, "but he looks capable of taking on the world's heavyweight champion for a finish fight."

Joe Lynch came in, nodding to those that he knew, then stood with his back to the heater. He's beginning to worry a little, Danny thought. Maureen isn't here yet and he's wondering whether she'll show up. Of course she'll show up. If she didn't he'd lose face, and lately he worries more over face than a Jap. But still he hasn't got one important point—this payload is people and not bombs. He can't jettison if he gets into a jam.

Danny heard his own car's familiar motor a few minutes later, and he saw a trace of relief mixed with triumph as Maureen came into the room. "I made some last minute changes in my dress," she said, "and asked Johnny to drive me down. I telephoned flight operations and learned that the Martins hadn't yet arrived."

So she made last minute changes in her clothes? Danny thought. She's wearing trail clothes. She's ready for a lot of walking if necessary. Maureen pulled off her mitts and several pairs of eyes, including Big Kate's, glanced toward her ring finger. They were polite and not too obvious about it. He wondered whether Joe had noticed. Yes, he had. There was bitterness about his lips as he turned and left the room.

CHAPTER III

VISIBILITY ZERO

HE HEARD a plane's single motor and went outside. The field lights were on, and he saw a ski plane coming in. It landed beautifully, skimming the surface inches above the snow, then sliding with hardly a wobble to a crawl. It returned and stopped.

Danny opened the door and Honey Martin framed the doorway. She had been standing there, Danny knew, to be the first out—to block any chance of her husband preceding her and helping her to the ground. She was a rather enchanting armful, Danny decided, as he received her into his upraised arms and gently swung her to her feet. "Thanks," she said sweetly, and her smile was friendly. Her gray eyes responded to the admiration that was in his eyes. And suddenly Danny guessed that that was the trouble between the Martins—a girl from the Outside, unused to an abnormal amount of male admiration had found it in Alaska and it had gone to her head. It was a common enough problem up here.

Now as her eyes briefly met her husband's, they were cold and aloof. Her face was polite boredom as she accepted the overnight bag he handed down and said, "Thank you."

Danny wondered about the room shortage in Anchorage. There had been occasions when couples who had definitely come to the parting of the ways had had to bunk together.

Chuck Martin slid his own and his wife's bags to the doorway and Danny set them onto the ground. Chuck was rugged, a rusty-headed, solid, dependable man who would make very few mistakes in life. He was a mining engineer who was making ground once classified as "hungry" pay dividends. "How goes it, Danny?" he said. "Sorry that we held you up."

It must be tough, Danny thought, to know that everyone knows that the little woman considers you on a par with sluice box tailings. He was tremendously fond of Chuck Martin. He knew when he hadn't a dime, and he had set him down, with a season's grub, in some pretty tough spots. The man rated the right kind of a wife and suddenly Danny was sorry that he had set Honey down so gently. He should have jarred her a little.

They went directly to the big plane, while Honey slipped into the waiting room to fix her face, and give a few deft touches to her hair which a parka hood can muss badly.

"Take care of the passengers, Danny," Joe said. "Let me know when we're all set." He went up front and readied for the takeoff.

Danny helped the passengers up the ladder. Chuck Martin stood on the other side, lending a hand. When Big Kate came along Chuck said, "Hello, Kate." He would never forget that when he was trying to get a start she was the only person who grubstaked him one season. He was picking up a reputation as a hard luck prospector and money was tight. Well, she had trippled her investment, had plowed it back into Chuck Martin and it had paid off ten for one.

"Glad to see you, Chuck," Kate said, then as he helped her up, "Thanks. I'm getting old. The fifteen hundred-odd ice steps up Chilkoot Pass were easier."

Old Man Kent stopped and looked back at Nome. "What is it the French say when they say good bye, but are coming back again? Oh yeah, *ah-river*. Ah-river, Nome." To no one in particular he said, "They're taking me Outside to cure me. I've seen 'em all—Jack London; Alec Maclean who was the original of the Sea Wolf; Soapy Smith . . . Jack put me in one of his books." With Danny and Chuck's help he climbed stiffly into the plane. He chuckled wisely, "Ah-river Nome, I'll be back."

Big Kate swallowed hard and muttered, "Ah-river Nome, damn it to hell." Father Carney, hearing her words, smiled with gentle understanding. He had never spoken to Big Kate. Their trails, so far apart,

He heard a plane's single motor and went outside. The field lights were on, and he saw a ski plane coming in.

were running parallel for the first time.

Chuck saw his wife coming and he swung aboard and found a seat, giving her the opportunity to take a seat as far as possible from him. Maureen followed Honey Martin and they took adjoining seats near the door. Chuck sat on the same side, with his big feet thrust in between pieces of freight.

Hank Dowling, carrying a small, thick mattress, spread it partly on the seats, partly on the freight, lashed it securely and made his wife snug. He kissed her, then stood back, regarding her anxiously. "S'long," he said, inadequately expressing his emotions, "and don't take any wooden nickels."

She smiled. "'Bye, Hank, and there's nothing to worry about. I've been through this before. And . . . Hank . . . don't forget to open the damper if you build a fire in the fireplace. You know your failing, and I don't want my new wallpaper smoked up. And keep out of poker games, *everyone* knows that your mouth twitches on the right side when you hold a winning hand."

"Remember about the wooden nickels," Hank said, as he made his way over freight and feet to the door.

Mary McGee came last, explaining to Danny, "Butch had an accident . . . of all things. I had to change him. The very idea, Butch, holding up a big plane full of people." Butch took this in stride. He burped, looked startled, then smiled.

Danny closed the door and went forward. "All set," he reported, securing his seat belt.

They taxied out, revved the motors, and were ready. "She would dress for the trail!" Joe Lynch said, savagely. "There's going to be a scene at Anchorage, and what a scene there'll be! That's all for now. From this second on, we're a couple of guys flying a plane."

"A couple of guys flying a plane," Danny echoed.

ICE-LOCKED Nome fell away. The moon was up, and Danny saw the familiar pattern of frozen lakes and streams—exquisite pieces of silver now—skimming under the wings. Here and there the wind had blown the snow into well-spaced rows and it looked as if the lakes were ice-free and a gale had kicked up a surf.

One man got on at Moses Point, and they headed across Norton Sound for Unalakleet. The ice was hardly more than three hundred feet below their wheels. It was safe flying, but Danny thought, If I were on the left hand side I'd get some elevation and waste gasoline. Some passengers don't like gliding over ice that might not take a good bounce.

The Moses Point passenger got off at Unalakleet and a couple more got on. Later, relaxed, Danny stared indifferently ahead. He could see the break in the scant timber that marked the old Nome mail trail. He thought of the old days when men and dogs crawled over it with first class mail when Nome was a roaring mining camp.

About now, he guessed, Old Man Kent was saying, "I mushed mail in the old days—mail and a new girl for the dance halls. The miners liked a fresh face, now and again. I've known 'em all . . ."

And the chances were good Old Man Kent had mushed mail to Nome. If you didn't strike it one season, you worked to get a grubstake for the next. You swamped out saloons; you took a pearl diving job in a beanery; and if you were big and tough, you got a bouncer's job and tossed the trouble-makers into the cold, starry night.

Danny thought, Balto led a team that carried serum to Nome while the world watched. I was going to run out to Central Park when we landed at New York, and see his statue. Forgot about it. And during the last epidemic Jack Jefford, driving in from the airport said, "Drive by the hospital, I brought some serum." Today it's as simple as that.

Usually on this part of the run, Joe Lynch tuned in a name band, or one or the other would fly while his companion caught up on his reading. Tonight there was no fellowship, no horsing around. Joe contacted McGrath and Galena. There were passengers at both points, but there wasn't a chance to land.

When the mountains came over the rim of the world, Danny noticed that the clouds were piling up. The warm front was moving in. Joe checked the weather and Danny took over for awhile. It was clear at Farewell, this side of the range, but very cold. But that could change in a hurry, Danny knew. Occasional snow flurries at Anchorage, but planes were coming in Merrill Field reported. Clear at Talkeetna, seventy-five miles north. Clear at Cold Deck.

Danny climbed above the clouds to avoid ice. Two lumps of dull silver above the clouds to the left and far ahead, were Mount McKinley, 20,300 feet, and Foraker, 17,500. He liked to know exactly where they were.

Again Joe made a check. Farewell, ceiling 3,000 feet, visibility seven miles. It had stopped snowing at Anchorage, but it looked as if it might start again. It was spitting ice particles at Cold Deck and Talkeetna.

Danny thought, If I had a load of bombs, I'd keep going. If my payload was people, I'd set her down at Farewell and put 'em to bed. He waited for Joe to say, "We'll call it a day, Danny," and start letting her down. He said nothing, and after several minutes he turned his head slightly and waited, as if expecting a comment.

None came, so he gazed straight ahead, his face betraying no hint of his inward emotions. This might be the build-up to an awful let-down, but Danny wasn't

elated. He wouldn't be elated even if the situation scared the hell out of Joe and they skinned safely by disaster. He didn't want to see Joe humble and contrite. What he wanted was the old guy who used to slap him on the back and ask, "Do you think pilots will ever be anything more than glorified truck drivers?" The old, down-to-earth Joe.

Joe took over and tried to climb above the thick weather ahead. In a few minutes they were buried in instrument weather. The de-icers were in operation and ice fragments kept rattling along the sides of the plane. Joe said, "Better bring the log up to date."

The AAA, in addition to required records, kept a log of each trip. Already some of the early-day flights were stirring reading. Danny made the usual entries, then made his way back and asked the passengers to sign the book. Someone asked, "Are we on time?" But Danny made it a point not to hear them. If he admitted they were on time, then most of the passengers would calculate their time of arrival, and if Joe couldn't set her down, they'd guess the reason.

The Alaskan passengers were different from the passengers flying Outside. They often checked on the weather, knew the extra margin of fuel a plane carried on different flights, and could make a fair estimate of the time a plane could remain aloft.

BUTCH had napped, but he was awake and restless. Old Man Kent was nodding. Remke was sprawled out on cargo, sound asleep. Edith Dowling smiled faintly, then was suddenly very sober. She turned her head away from the others. Danny sat down beside Maureen and whispered, "Find out if she's in labor."

"O.K.," she answered. "What's it like at Anchorage?"

"Planes have been coming in," Danny answered, and she knew that he was evading a direct reply.

They passed the log book from one to another and when it came to Old Man Kent's turn, he muttered, "Can't seem to steady my hand. Never was much of a penman." He scrawled his name. "Log book! Reminds me of the trips Outside I made with Dynamite Johnny O'Brien. There was a man! He'd make a landing in mighty foul weather. He'd have a rabbit's foot in one pocket and a rosary in the other, and he'd be cussin' like as not, but he'd make it. Oh I knew 'em all in my time, Jack London . . ." He nodded, then jerked up his head. "Dynamite Johnny and the Old Vic—there was a winning pair." His expression became suddenly vacant, as if his face muscles were tired of portraying emotions. His head nodded and for a moment it was still except for the muffled boom of the motors and the rattle of ice thrown from the propellers. Beneath them gaunt peaks paraded in ghostly formations.

The log book came to Big Kate and she signed it without a word and leaned across the cargo and gave it to Mrs. Dowling. She signed the book quickly and returned it. Big Kate said, "If there's anything that I can do . . . ?"

"Thank you, we must be almost there. My ears have been hurting, too, and we must be crossing the mountains," Edith Dowling said. "I'm . . . O.K., I . . . guess."

Big Kate passed the book to Chuck Martin, and returned to her seat. So many times in her life, she remembered, she had faced emergencies. She looked at her watch, and guessed that they would land within an hour, even allowing for adverse winds, if there were any.

Danny sat down beside Honey Martin and opened the log book. "We take 'em in order. You're last."

The girl signed the book and asked, "Where can I stop in Anchorage, this time of night?"

"The room situation is tough," Danny answered. "Joe and I bunk together. Maureen will stay with a friend. Did you radio the hotels?"

"Yes. No reservations," she answered. "If you can think of anything, please let me know. I'll sit up in a chair if I have to." She looked older than her twenty-two years and Danny realized that she must be desperately tired. A few hours ago, at Nome, she had seemed fresh and buoyant.

As she turned toward Danny, her eyes met Chuck's. She saw understanding and sympathy in them, and suddenly she was proud and defiant and no longer tired and worried. Danny went over and sat down beside Father Carney. "The Martins aren't

of your faith, Father," he said, "and so perhaps you aren't familiar with the case. Perhaps nothing can be done, but . . . Chuck is an old friend, and I hate to see him miserable."

"Chuck is a solid rock," Father Carney answered, "and I'm afraid that his wife has never felt the need of a rock. In this life, Danny, we are so much happier when we need someone, or someone needs us. Chuck has never, I'm afraid, convinced his wife that he really needs her. He is so adequate in every respect. And she has never felt the need of him. Why should she when there were handsome, romantic young fellows to spoil her, to serve her from the day she stepped from a plane to tundra?" He sighed. "There is so much to be done in the world, and so little time in which to do it."

Danny went up front, put the log book away, and took his place. Joe's expression was serious, and Danny thought, He's had a bad weather report. He said nothing, but waited for orders. Presently Joe began taking her down, but he didn't speak for some time, then he said, "If you spot a break in the overcast, let me know."

"Check," Danny answered. Their altitude was one thousand. "What does the tower say about the weather?" he asked.

"The field's socked in," he answered, "but it clears for a few minutes at a time —clears enough to set her down, or—has been."

"What about Farewell?"

"Still clear there. I'll save enough fuel to go back over the mountains," Joe said confidently.

Danny thought, The payload is people, not bombs and I'd hightail it for Farewell now. He gazed steadily downward. Sometimes he couldn't see the wing tips, but again there were several hundred yards of visibility, then they'd move into the ice fog again and the props would throw ice at them. Once he thought he saw a faint, red stain below. That would be a red neon sign in Anchorage. Maybe the tavern where he *was* going to buy Jack Jefford and Bill Hanson a drink this very night. "Was" is right, he thought, they've put King Chris to bed and are ready for their own bunks by now.

He heard Farewell reporting it was snowing lightly, but there was ample visibility. I'd get over those mountains, Danny thought. This weather hasn't heard that Lucky Lynch is flying the Malemute tonight. Still, to be fair, Anchorage might clear and Farewell be socked in. He had a chance to make the right decision at Farewell, but he thought he was lucky. It may hold at that. Brother, I hope so.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT GOES UP—

COLD DECK came in to let them know it was snowing occasionally there. It was Nancy's voice and Danny relished the swifter cadence of his heart. A most noble emotion, Daniel, old son, he thought without trying to be funny.

Then Minchumina came in with a weather report. The CAA people are beginning to worry, Danny thought. Well, each station had the complete weather picture.

Back and forth they flew on the range, getting down at times to two hundred feet, then climbing to a safer level. Danny remembered the times he had flown that low, got under the ceiling, oriented himself by the town's layout, then followed the road down to the field. But not with a DC3, nor with passengers, as a rule.

In his own mind, he reviewed Joe's alternatives. Chances are coming down in the Anchorage area, they wouldn't hit a level spot. There was too much surrounding country. They might land on a Cook's Inlet tideflat where they'd probably drown if they didn't smother in the ooze before the incoming tide.

What did that leave? Not much. There were a lot of big lakes in the Cold Deck area, frozen deep—capable of receiving a bomber—but there were ridges, too, and stands of timber.

The lakes, of course, would be covered with snow. You'd have to keep your wheels up and land on the Malemute's belly. You'd lose your props, sure. You might lose both motors, but chances are the fuselage would hang together and no one would be seriously hurt. But it was no sort of landing for Edith Dowling, nor for Mary McGee, with Butch in her arms. You could pretty well figure the stork would say, "I've chased you all the way from Nome, and enough is enough. Here you are."

"O.K.," Joe said, suddenly savage, "you've figured it all out, haven't you? Well . . . out with it."

"I've figured out nothing that's worth much—nothing that hasn't already come into your mind," Danny answered. "I think the passengers may be worrying. Most of them know you can't set her down."

"Go in and reassure them," Joe answered. "Wait! Have you thought about trying one of the lakes up Cold Deck way?"

"Yeah, and I thought of the ridges, too," Danny answered.

The instant he closed the door behind him, the eyes of every passenger were on his face. His cheerful expression and matter-of-fact attitude might have deceived some, but not Father Carney, Maureen, Big Kate, nor Chuck Martin. He lightly mentioned head winds and a detour to avoid some particularly stormy weather areas.

He said something cheerful to Mary McGee. She was getting air sick, and Butch was fretful. She couldn't seem to get him to sleep soundly.

Honey's eyes followed Danny up and down the plane, then as he sat down beside Chuck, she assumed her pose of cold boredom.

"She's pretty," Chuck said quietly to Danny, "even when her face is as cold as marble." Danny nodded, because it was true. Chuck lowered his voice. "You aren't fooling me, Danny. Joe can't set her down and fuel's low."

"It adds up to just about that," Danny admitted.

"Father Carney knows it. He's been praying in his quiet way, though few would guess it. He's the last one to pray loudly and scare people green," Chuck said. "I guess the only thing to do is wait. Joe's got her throttled down to stretch the fuel, I can tell that by the sound of the motors."

"You've flown too damned much," Danny said. "You're too blasted smart. I'll laugh lightly, and you laugh lightly and maybe we'll manage to fool some of 'em, anyhow."

That brought a grin to Chuck's face, and for some reason, Danny laughed. Maureen, who wasn't deceived in the slightest, smiled, too.

His cheerful expression might have deceived some, but not Father Carney, Maureen, Big Kate, nor Chuck Martin.

OLD Man Kent motioned to Danny. "They're taking me Outside to cure me, you know. I'll be back. I've been sitting here thinking and planning." His face was bright with hope. Dullness left his eyes, and they grew bright—abnormally bright, like a light bulb carrying too much current. "You don't want to be a pilot all your life. Now why not grubstake me next spring? I know of a creek that hasn't been prospected rightly. They never got down to the true bedrock. Only the false bedrock."

"That happens," Danny agreed.

"Grubstake me, and I'll take enough money out to last us our lifetime," Old Man Kent said. "My luck's due to change. I know what I'm talking about. I've got a lifetime's experience behind me. I knew 'em all, and picked up pointers from each —Tex Rickard, Jack London. He put me in a book, once. Then there was Spieler Kelly and the Ragtime Kid . . ." His voice grew dreamy, his eyes foggy, but he straightened up with an effort. "Think that grubstake deal over, Danny, you don't want to pilot a plane all your life. You might get killed."

"I'll think it over," Danny agreed.

"Some mighty good friends of mine died in crack-ups," Old Man Kent said. "There was one who went out hunting a lost plane against his better judgment. He figured he was down somewhere and would show up in time. He wanted to wait until the weather got better, so he could see things. But they needled him, you might say. Questioned his courage. The lost plane came in when the weather got better. He never did. They found him in his wrecked plane. Don't stretch your luck, Danny."

That isn't the half of it, brother, Danny thought. He went over to Edith Dowling and she smiled faintly. "My ears don't hurt," she said. "We must be trying to land. I think I know the trouble." He knew that she realized the situation, now. "I've said a little prayer, Danny. I suppose, if our luck is all bad, it . . . it . . . is instant."

"Oh, it isn't coming to that," Danny insisted. "But if it did? Well I had a dream once. Realistic. And it happened instantly. You just didn't know. Only the pilots knew that it was coming, and the danger didn't have a chance to really register."

"I wanted to go in three days ago," she said, "but Hank insisted that I wait for the Malemute. He said it was a lucky plane."

"I'm betting that it is," Danny replied. "Let's talk of something more sensible. What about Hank giving AAA the job of freighting his furs this season? Fly 'em all the way to New York, via AAA and connecting lines and hit the best markets?"

Father Carney thought, he's putting Edith Dowling at ease, bless him. Then he hastily made his way to Mary McGee's side. She was air sick and needed one of the paper containers. He gave it to her then took Butch from her arms. He wasn't exactly spoiled, but Butch in his present mood wanted his mother. He began crying and Father Carney looked helplessly about.

"Let me hold him, Father," Big Kate said. "I hope his mother won't mind."

"I know she won't," Father Carney answered.

"Possibly you don't realize it, Father," Big Kate said, "but the chips are down. The fuel supply must be very low. I'm thinking that if there're things to be done —things required by your faith, that you'd better be about it. If I intruded, I'm sorry."

"I have realized the situation, and have prayed," Father Carney replied. "Is . . . is there anything that I can do for you?"

"My code has always been—never welch on a deal, never whimper," Big Kate answered. "And I wouldn't run crying to Him now. Oh, I know that He is a just God, but my record is bad . . ."

"I recall a time when a small pox epidemic broke out on one of the creeks," Father Carney said thoughtfully. "It was the oriental type and men died swiftly. In the dead of winter, Big Kate, as she is known, hitched up her dog team, mushed over a hundred miles and spent two months nursing them. As the miners were broke, she paid all expenses out of her own purse." He smiled faintly. "Certainly one with my many shortcomings and failures would never cast a stone."

"Oh Big Kate wasn't so generous that time, Father," she said. "You can't get blood out of a turnip, as the saying goes.

But *you* have no stains on your record. The countless times you've gone into vile weather to comfort the dying. No, Father, it would be a low grade sort of Heaven if there hasn't been a special place reserved for you on the Lord's right."

"There was the time Slim Kerry was dying," Father Carney said sadly. "He sent for me. I couldn't . . . or, rather didn't, get beyond my own door. He died without the last sacrament. That has troubled me sorely."

"Slim Kerry was a no-good bum. You had a raging fever, temperature around a hundred and four, and it was thirty below outside," Big Kate said. "You might have died. Think of the good you've done since."

"But if I'd have summoned just a little more fortitude," Father Carney said, "I might have . . ."

"No, it wasn't His will that night," Big Kate argued. "In our way, we are authorities on evil. But you're an authority on good, as well. I'm not fit to breathe the same air, Father. Nor is anyone else, except this baby."

"There was the stagestruck girl who caught a steamer for Nome. Her mother wrote the United States marshal, who turned the letter over to Big Kate, at whose resort the girl was singing and dancing. Big Kate shipped her home at her own expense."

BIG Kate shrugged her shoulders and thought, What the hell. She said, "It'll take more than a trivial thing like that to balance the scale. I robbed them blind. I watered the whiskey . . ."

"When the whiskey supply was low and the first steamer into Nome was icebound," Father Carney said. "And when they were blind drunk, you pinched their pokes—and returned them to them intact when they had sobered up."

Kate twitched, as a woman does when she is losing an argument. "We'll say no more about it. Besides, Butch is getting fretful. And I shall have the last word, too, which is a woman's right. Who was it that shot Horse Tail Rapids—the only man whoever attempted it? Father Carney, because rival factions downriver were getting ready to settle a mining claim dispute with sawed off shotguns loaded with buckshot. And shooting the rapids was the only way he could get there in time."

She thought, We can't stay up much longer. Danny is comforting Edith Dowling. I wish I could quiet Butch. Huh. Honey Martin is beginning to realize that her number is up.

Honey had grown progressively paler as she sensed that something was wrong. Twice she had glanced quickly at her husband's face to learn something of his thoughts. But Chuck, who knew his wife better than she knew him because he had worked hard at it, sensed her probable action and maintained a poker face.

She unfastened her seat belt and made her way to her overnight bag, secured with the freight. It was a pitiful effort to save face in a search for comfort. She fumbled with the straps, and Chuck asked, "Want your bag?"

"Yes, I've a splitting headache and thought I'd take something," she said.

He opened the bag and gave her the aspirin bottle. "I'll get you some water," he said, closing the bag. "Better fasten your seat belt while I'm gone. It's rough in spots. Mary is sicker'n a dog."

It was a generous move on his part to make it easy for her to sit beside him and keep her precious dignity. He brought the water and she took two tablets. Usually she took four ; she was a member of the school of self-doctors that believed if two was a dose, twice as much would prove doubly effective.

The cold, set expression was gone from her face, and it seemed to him that she was growing smaller as her fear increased. Pride died slowly, but a series of bumps killed it. "You've always told me the truth, Chuck," she said, "and I want it now. Are we going to be—killed?"

He thought, If I had kidded her more, we might have made a go of it. Engineers are too damned factual to be romantic. They know that two and two add up to four. They can't conceive the total could be three or five. He said, "Yes, there's a chance. But you won't know it! It'll happen fast." The engineer was calculating. He wasn't kidding himself nor her, because you can't deny facts. "On the other hand, two of the best Arctic pilots in the North are up front. That is, Danny will be up there, too, when it is landing time."

She was quiet a long time. "It is so

Father Carney

hard to be brave, to stand alone, Chuck," she said. "I'd like to cry a little, then cling to you and wait."

"Don't cry," he said. "It might add to the others' burden. But—cling." He leaned closer to her.

"I think for the first time in my life, Chuck, I've needed you. You made the mistake of wanting me to stand on my own feet. The family made the same mistake. I'm the type that needs someone and hasn't realized it. I'm not a very noble soul," she confessed.

"But you are," he argued. "And you're finding your true worth. But—cling. What do you care if others notice?"

"Big Kate is a bad woman," she said. "She knows she may be killed any instant. But she's not asking Father Carney to hear a confession of her sins. She's not running to God because she's scared stiff. I've prayed, but—I'm not running to you, Chuck. I'm not clinging. But . . ."

"But . . . what?"

"I want to be by your side, I guess when —it happens," she explained. Her fingers touched his wrist, then his arm and tightened. "You're hard, like a rock. You don't shake. You aren't shaking now. And you've always been so tender toward me. I want you to know I've just realized it. Look, Butch is twisting and squirming. He can't sleep. Do you suppose that babies sense things like this?"

"Hell no!"

"Look, she's swaying back and forth, singing softly," Honey said. "Brahms' *Lullaby*." She looked at Chuck. "But how would she know it?"

"She married a guy who wasn't much back in the Dawson days," Chuck answered. "He took her home, and the family learned she'd danced in Dawson and sold liquor on a percentage basis. They made him kick her out. As I said, he wasn't much of a guy. She had a son. She was afraid some stuffed shirt of a judge would take the baby away from her, so she disappeared. It was a couple of years before she showed up in the gold camps again. Chances are she learned a lullaby or two then. Her son was a good man. He was never ashamed of his mother. That's about all there is to it."

Kate's voice drifted like a soft breeze throughout the plane. "Go to sleep, close thy eyes, thou shall seek paradise . . . '"

Damn that paradise part, Danny thought. His eyes shifted from face to face. Not one showed fear.

OLD Man Kent lifted his head from daydreaming and listened. "Like I said, in the old days she sang alto. It made a man want to cry, but it sorta relaxed him, too. It brought many an ounce of dust to whoever she was working for, too. Sometimes they'd give her a nugget shower—threw 'em on the stage by the handful. But that was in the old days—before planes. Oh, I knew 'em all, Jack London . . . he put me in a book."

"Yeah, I know he did, Dad," Pete Remke said.

"Then later came the planes, Ben Eielson, Croson and the others, oh I knew 'em . . . "

"Listen," Remke whispered, "to that song."

Danny climbed over feet and legs, squeezed Maureen's shoulder in passing, and went on up front, closing the door behind him. He looked at the gauges as he strapped himself into the seat. "How're the passengers?" Joe asked.

Danny didn't answer, and Joe said, hot-

ly, "I asked you a question, in the line of duty, and I want an answer. How're the passengers?"

Danny turned slowly. "Listen, Joe, go back and look 'em over. You've seen how soldiers aloft, with guns in their hands faced death? I said, with guns in their hands. Go back there and see how the mine-run American, without weapons in his hands, with nothing but hope and faith in you and me, face death. You'll get what I've been driving at. You'll get why I've resented your leaning on your luck and all that."

"You have a dream, and you think that was a warning of what was coming on this particular flight from Nome?" Joe angrily demanded. "Nuts!"

"No, I don't think that," Danny answered. "I've seen you getting into careless habits. And you know damned well why I've strung along with you all these years, when I could have had a plane of my own. Or you should. I wanted to contribute everything I had, to what you already had and insure your being the best damned pilot in the North, if not the world. I figure Maureen rated no less. I figure I'm entitled to some consideration at your hands, too. Now about the dream—that developed from my worrying over your carelessness. Now you get the hell back there and look over your passengers."

"Aren't you forgetting who you're talking to?"

"Not for a split second," Danny answered. "Right now, the passengers know nothing of our feud, but they're going to unless you do as I'm telling you. I'll sock you into submission and throw you back, and we'll let the automatic pilot do the job. At least it never gets a swelled head."

"I think you're crazy," Joe answered. "But I'm going back because a mental case aloft takes diplomacy."

He went back, and in a minute or two, Maureen came. She put her hands against the door jambs and leaned forward until her head was even with her brother's. He lifted his earphones. She asked, "You had a showdown?"

"He went back to reassure the passengers," he answered.

"Don't kid me, Danny," she said. "I know Joe and you too well."

"What you don't know, won't hurt you. Just a minute. I've contacted Nancy at Cold Deck. You've a fix on us, Nancy? Ask Fred Ballard to come in if he hears the motors."

Fred was a ham operator and he came in without being asked. "You're southwest of us, Danny. There's a twenty-five mile west wind here. Ceiling, fifty feet. Visibility uncertain. It's snowing, but not too bad. Over."

"Roger on that, Fred."

Maureen thought, Danny's going to set her down on the first lake. That would be Lake Mansfield, seven miles wide and nine long. He's going to take the responsibility and take the rap if there's a bad crack-up and investigation. I'm hanged if I'm going to let him do it. He said, grinning, "Beat it, before Joe thinks we're plotting against him. And don't start mind reading, and objecting to my immediate flight plan." She leaned down quickly and kissed his cheek. It was rough to her lips, but cool.

The altitude was a thousand feet—safe enough in a rolling country—when Ballard's voice broke in again. "Nice going, old son, you'll pass over my cabin in . . .

Big Kate

You're over it now." He checked the air speed with his known position and set his course. This was old bush stuff.

The clouds were pressing in on all sides, spitting ice particles. The wing tips were no longer visible, then suddenly it was lighter overhead and he knew the overcast was so thin the moon was trying to shine through.

He banked so suddenly it must have thrown the passengers about and given Joe Lynch a scare. Sometimes these thin spots meant a hole all the way to the ground. He was trying to get back to it. It was dark again, but as he circled, it suddenly grew light. He threw on the landing lights and gazed intently downward. Nothing but swirling snow, then at three hundred feet he saw an irregular line. That would be timber on the narrow island on the easterly side of the lake.

Now he was really under the ceiling and he could see the glare as the snow reflected the landing lights. He heard Joe working on the door, which unaccountably, or perhaps it was accountable, was stuck.

The snow below looked deep and drifted, because there were moments when the landing lights sent shadows darting ahead. Odd, swift shadows, like moving animals seeking cover. He called Cold Deck and asked, "Now what have you got? Over."

"Snowing and hardly any ceiling," Nancy answered. "I'm switching on the field lights. Are you coming in? Over."

"Stand by," he answered.

Then Joe Lynch was standing in the doorway, and reading the air speed. He wasn't giving advice, nor making a belated effort to take over. He just said, "Set her down when you're ready." And in that brief sentence accepted full responsibility. Danny let down the wheels.

The field was little more than twin, faint streaks where the rows of light

The clouds were pressing in on all sides, spitting ice particles.

pushed through the swirling flakes. Danny set her down with quite a jolt, because he couldn't see coming back in again and trying to find a field that was practically under his wheels. She ran almost to the end of the strip, then he turned her around and brought her to the huddle of cottages that marked the station and the CAA personnel's homes.

He could see the lights coming on in the cottages. The women knew what this emergency landing meant—bedding down passengers on davenports and floors, building fires in emergency cabins, breaking out emergency rations for breakfast.

For several seconds after the motors stopped, Danny sat there, waiting for the tension to wear off. It didn't wear off. He got up and followed Joe. The passengers were picking up their overnight bags and bunching around the door. Big Kate was still carrying Butch, who had napped briefly and was more optimistic about the future. He burped a couple of times, looked startled and beamed. His mother followed.

A man was helping them down the ladder, and pointing out the cottages they were to occupy. "You had better go to my place, Mrs. McGee," he said. "We've got a baby, too, and you'll find everything you need there. Mrs. Dowling, you'd better take the next cottage." He added realistically, "Stan's wife used to be a registered nurse."

He saw Chuck Martin, and hesitated. He knew why the Martins were doing Outside. "Put *us* anywhere," Chuck said. "What's the matter with the tent? It's small, got a good floor, and the heater will warm it up."

"Yes," Honey said, "the tent will be fine for us. Anything."

Father Carney smiled happily.

"O.K., Martins, take the tent," the busy man agreed.

"Thanks, Larry," Chuck said. He broke trail toward the tent, carrying Honey's overnight bag, and his own. He thought, happily, We faced death together. It shouldn't be too tough to face life from here on in.

Larry sent Big Kate to a small cabin, and directed Father Carney to a cottage occupied by unmarried men.

Nancy came out and Danny said, "Hello." He put his arm around her and gave her a bear hug because he felt like it. "I hope we're here for a week," he said.

"You're bunking with me, Maureen," Nancy said. "And I hope you stay here for a week, but the darned weather is going to break in thirty-six hours."

Danny grinned. "A lot can happen in thirty-six hours," he said.

Old Man Kent was helped to the ground. He looked around, blinking his eyes. "Where's Cold Deck?" he asked.

"Oh, this is only the airstrip," Larry said. "The town's four miles from here."

"Cold Deck. I was here when the stampede started. Flapjack Meehan and Tubby Willows founded the camp. Oh, I knew 'em all. Jack London—he put me in a book. Did you know that? Yeah, I was right in there. And there's a cuss in Rex Beach's Iron Trail that I've got a stinking notion is me. Oh, I knew 'em all. They're taking me Outside to . . . "

"Come on, Dad," Remke said gently.

"S'long folks," Old Man Kent said. "They'll fix me up, and I'll be back breakup time." He waved his hand stiffly. "As the Frenchman says, Ah-River. See you in the morning." He got in step with the deputy marshal. "Pete, it was a night like this that I dropped into Tex Rickard's place in Nome . . . Let's see what was I going to tell you? I can't seem to remember like I used to. A lot of 'em gone! Good men. God's noblemen. And I knew 'em . . . Tex Rickard, Jack London. He put me . . . " His voice trailed off in the distance.

Danny opened a compartment and took out the plane's wing covers. With Joe's help he put them on. They made the plane secure against possible gusts of wind, then went silently to the cabin assigned them. It had a double bed, and they had occupied it on several occasions. They undressed slowly, the tenseness of the flight still on them.

Danny was in bed first, then Joe came in, pulling the covers up to his chin. Each twisted this way and that. They couldn't relax, couldn't sleep. Neither had ever had a closer shave. They each lit a cigarette, and flashes of the flight from Nome came before their eyes—Old Man Kent who lived in the past; Big Kate singing to Butch; the Martins drawing toward each other as the tanks emptied; and their own clash alone, up there in the pit.

Danny rolled over on his stomach and closed his eyes. There was a long silence, then he felt Joe stirring. Joe's hand came down with the hardest smack he had ever given him. It hit the old familiar spot, between his shoulder blades. "Danny," he exclaimed, "do you think plane pilots will *ever* be anything more than glorified truck drivers?"

A FACT STORY

DEATH AND A PAIR OF SHOES

By RAY MACKLAND

THE hanging of "Big Nose" George, last name variable, a badman of the Old West, is one of the more bizarre chapters of pioneer history. Some of the facts are vague, even contradictory, but a pair of shoes made from the skin off his chest give stark realism to the story.

In the late summer of 1880, a loose rail was discovered a few miles east of Carbon, Wyoming, on the Union Pacific's main line. A wire fastened to the rail trailed into the sagebrush; if bandits hidden there pulled the rail on the westbound express, it would plunge down a steep, sharply curving grade off a thirty-foot embankment, and permit them to rob the passengers and loot the monthly cash pay car. This was the era of early big train robberies.

There are two versions of what happened. According to the first prosaic account, an entire section crew noticed the disconnected rail and merely climbed off their handcar to spike it. "Big Nose" George later claimed he saved their lives when his pals wanted to shoot them.

The more exciting, movie-like description is that a lone section foreman, on foot, made the discovery but with unerring instinct outwardly ignored the malefaction and continued on his way: afterward it was learned that the bandits, covering him with rifles from a ravine a hundred yards away, couldn't make up their minds whether to kill him on the spot.

The foreman walked several miles in time to telegraph a warning to the express and a trap was set for the bandits. Guarded by strong military units from Fort Sanders, an engine running alone preceded the express to the scene—but the gang, suspicious of the delay, had fled.

DESPITE pretty clear evidence that at least nine men composed the gang, Sheriff's Deputies Widdowfield and Tip Vincent fearlessly took up the search for them alone. Disguising themselves as prospectors, leading packhorses loaded with gold pans, picks and shovels, it was their bold intention to join the gang, gain the confidence of its members and obtain their names and descriptions in order later to effect their capture.

The bandits retreated to the base of Elk mountain, and Widdowfield and Vincent were tracking them up a wild canyon appropriately named Rattlesnake when a lookout spotted them. The gang quickly extinguished its fire and the bandits and their horses were well hidden in timber when the two officers reached what to all appearances was a deserted camp.

One pursuer dismounted, sifted the ashes of the fire through his hands. One frontier account, evidently based on a later confession, reports he exclaimed, "They're hot. We'll have them inside of an hour."

The words were hardly out of his mouth before a fusillade of shots struck the man kneeling by the ashes and

brought down his mounted companion before he could spur away. A posse found their bodies a few weeks later. One was riddled by almost a dozen bullets.

As with most tales of the Old West, the story unravels with a moral: Drink proved the villian's undoing. A drunk, none other than "Big Nose" of course, was arrested after boasting in a Montana saloon of specific misdeeds which convinced anyone within hearing that he was badly wanted in Wyoming. A gun pal known as Dutch Charley also was seized but two desperadoes escaped. One of them, Tom Reed, was believed to be one of the Younger boys; the other, euphemistically called Sin Wan, was whispered to be Frank James. Such identifications of these terrorists, however, were commonplace the wild country over.

George came back to Wyoming hobbled in heavy shackles made by James Candlish, Rawlins blacksmith. A welcoming committe boarded the train at Carbon, the state's first mining town, named for its big coal deposits, now a "ghost" eleven miles southeast of Hanna. The prisoner was escorted into the Carbon station and given the "alternative"—rare under lynch law—of making a full confession and then being allowed to proceed to Rawlins, the county seat. The confession was taken by a telegraph operator, the late E. E. Calvin, who later was to become president of the Union Pacific.

In Rawlins, George promptly tried to plead guilty. The judge, apparently seeking to free the prisoner from any thought of duress, first returned him to jail to meditate and then sent the late John W. Meldrum, afterward recognized as "The Grand Old Man of Yellowstone National Park," to see him.

According to Meldrum's own story, he was ordered, verbatim: "I want you to go to the jail and interview the gentleman with the pronounced proboscis and ascertain whether or not he is *compos mentis*."

Meldrum found George "meditating" on his bunk, his head in his hands and his nose between them, if this identifying feature lived up to its reputation. George wasn't cheered by promise of the court's protection during trial. He had reasoned, probably correctly, that he had no choice but hanging, but hoped to determine the method: by the sheriff if he pleaded guilty, by a mob if he entered a not guilty plea. He preferred the former.

"Big Nose" was found guilty December 15, 1880, and sentenced to be hanged April 2, 1881. The final session of court was climactic. The judge bade the governor of the Territory, county and city officials and all members of the clergy to attend. All were commanded to rise and stand at attention while sentence was pronounced on George.

Although an official hanging, his wish in a decidedly limited situation, now seemed assured, George couldn't leave well enough alone. With a caseknife secreted in his cell, he managed to saw the rivets from his leg irons and the evening of March 20 when Jailer Rankin, the sheriff's brother, brought him his supper, he banged him on the head with them. This desperate effort gained him nothing, however, for he had failed to reckon with the felled jailer's wife, a woman of courage and resource. Hearing the commotion, she closed the main door, then rushed in and waved George back into his cell with a pistol and convincing threats that she would shoot to kill. The badman was completely cowed when help arrived.

BY THIS time, the citizenry was tired of fooling around with George. Dr. J. E. Osborne, later governor of Wyoming, had just come to Rawlins as U.P. surgeon. He was called to repair the injured jailer and the blacksmith came to repair George's irons.

Half an hour later, the doctor was waited upon at his office door by a "gun and rope" committee. He was requested to accompany them, "for the purpose of telling when the prisoner was dead, as they did not want to run the slightest risk."

With his legs reshackled and his hands tied behind his back, George was stood on an empty kerosene barrel beside a telegraph pole. One end of a rope was knotted around his neck and the other end tossed over the crossarm of the pole.

There is one report that George was strung up four times in an effort to scare out of him the names of his bandit pals. A more likely account limits the number of "elevations" to two.

When the barrel was kicked out from

under him on the first attempt the rope broke and George fell to the ground, begging to be shot. To the very last, the fellow was ingenious. Now the committe discovered he had succeeded in untying the rope binding his hands.

Another rope was noosed around his neck and George was forced up a ladder. At twelve feet it was jerked away from him. George shrewdly flung his arms around the pole and might have cheated the mob again but his shackles weighted him down. Unable to climb, or even to cling to the pole, he slid down slowly until he choked to death.

The body was left hanging for several hours, as a warning to evil-doers, and then turned over to William Daley, Rawlins' only undertaker. Daley cut off the leg irons and presented them to Osborne. The frontier doctor, in a strange sequel, also was permitted to make a death mask of "Big Nose" and to remove enough skin from the dead man's chest to be tanned and made into a pair of shoes.

Grim mementoes handed down over more than half a century keep fresh the story of the lynching. When Dr. Osborne died, the shoes were left as the permanent property of the Rawlins National Bank, of which he was chairman of the board. Pictures of them, the plaster of paris death mask and of George himself, and the actual shackles made by the blacksmith are on display at the Union Pacific museum in Omaha, which also shows a piece of tanned skin taken from George's chest. This was possessed, in turn, by a university professor, an oil company president and finally Calvin, who took George's confession.

In a glass case in Wyoming's state museum can be viewed a gold watch, with key, in a handsome, velvet-lined case. This was presented to Mrs. Rosa Rankin, the jailer's wife, by the Carbon county commission, only two days after the occurrence, for her bravery in preventing George's escape.

A Wyoming pioneer ballad rhymes George's story in detail, to an appalling conclusion:

The Lynching of "Big Nose" George

Now at the round-up cookin' fires
You'll hear this ditty sung
Of the rippin', roarin' good old West
When "Big Nose" George was hung.

This George, he robbed the U.P. trains
An' double-crossed his pals
An' freely spent his stolen loot
A-boozin' with the gals.

He liked his likker mighty well—
It proved his downfall, too,
Because he boasted once, when full
Of strong Montana brew.

The word was rushed to Carbon
An' the sheriff an' his men
Went up an' handcuffed George an' swore
He'd never rob again.

They took him down to Carbon
An' they locked him in the jail
An' turned down every offer
That was made to go his bail.

A mob, they battered down the doors
An' drug him from his cell
An', when they strung him from a post,
Consigned his soul to hell.

He got the tie-ropes off his hands
An' off his feet beside
An' tried to shinny up the post
But slipped an' kicked, an' died.

The Doc went up an' felt his heart
An' duly swore him dead
An' with some paris plaster
Made a castin' of his head.

An' took some hide from off his chest
An' had it cured and tanned
An' made into a pair of shoes
That always used to stand

Right in his office window. Well,
They planted George that night
An' on the brush around his grave
There fell an awful blight.

No green stuff grew there any more—
He pizened up the prairie.
My Pa, he went to see it once,
An' said it shore was scary.

So at the round-up cookin' fires
You'll hear this ditty sung
Of the fightin', lynchin', good old West
When "Big Nose" George was hung.

A DINGO FOR DELILAH

By
JULES ARCHER

HOLDING the wheel firmly with one hand, Fred MacLachlan rolled the makings with his other. He was almost there. Sunset threw a purple mantle over blue eucalypts as he bounced the car faster along the bush road. Casting a sidelong glance at the black, wolf-like dog riding beside him, MacLachlan speculated upon his chances.

It would all be up to Delilah. Make or break.

Nothing loused up the promotion of an Australian field officer with the Dingo Destruction Board quicker than a nice fat

ILLUSTRATED BY
HARRY BURNS

Suddenly, the goanna released its death grip.

failure. That's why the smart boys played it safe. They pretended that Noorie station, in the burning, sticky Kimberleys of Western Australia, was a hunk of Outer Mongolia.

Nobody wanted any part of station owner Jack Carter. Urged by the Board to cooperate in setting up a dingo destruction district, the rancher had wired scornfully, "Deeply touched by the Commonwealth's interest in my sheep losses. Your armchair experts could teach me as much about killing dingoes as I could teach them about wasting the taxpayer's money."

Then, unexpectedly, Fred MacLachlan had opened his homely mouth for a voluntary bite at the hot potato. "I'd like to have a go at bringing Carter into the fold, Chief," he told the astonished Board Director. "I hear Hoppy's operating at Noorie. If Delilah can trap the worst dingo in Aussie for him, I think he'll come around."

The smart boys had all sliced their throats with significant fingers. It didn't disturb MacLachlan that, behind his back, they were offering "over the fence" odds against him. That merely proved, he shrugged, how badly you can underestimate a sheila. Delilah, the dingo he had trained from a handful of fur, had never failed him yet.

Now, as tall meadow hay stirred in an early evening wind, the redheaded young field officer caught his first glimpse of Noorie homestead. Sprawled on the shoulder of a hill, the big white house regally surveyed its three thousand acre sheep empire. A mile away lay the shearing shed, its corrugated iron roof burnished by the setting sun.

A kookaburra, the bushman's alarm clock, uttered its piercing, throaty farewell to daylight. MacLachlan glanced at his wristwatch. Almost six. Good timing, he thought with satisfaction. Hands being short that year, Carter would have been working in the shed with his men, like most station owners, until the 5:30 bell.

WHEN he finally applied brakes in the long shadow of the homestead, Delilah leaped from the car in one lithe spring. Holding her legs tense she stretched briefly, then trotted up the veranda steps after her master. A small, tight-faced woman opened the door. Her hard lips fell open when she saw the dingo.

"It's all right, ma'am," MacLachlan said reassuringly. "She's trained. Is Mr. Carter home?"

"Come in," the woman said dubiously. MacLachlan followed her through a long hall into a large, airy living room, whose walls presented a floral tapestry and rugged paintings of the Kimberleys. Two men, talking in friendly tones, stood at a window which framed a sea of fleece blanketing a distant paddock.

"Somebody to see you, Jack," the woman told one of the men. "Tucker'll be ready in twenty minutes. I'll set another plate." With an apprehensive glance at Delilah, she disappeared.

MacLachlan slight-twisted his head in the uniquely Australian style of salutation. "G'day, Mr. Carter. I'm MacLachlan of the Dingo Destruction Board." He held out a firm, cordial hand.

Jack Carter shook it slowly, nothing in his leathery face revealing surprise or displeasure. He was about fifty, with half-silvered hair and a perpetual sun squint to his pale blue eyes. Silently appraising both his visitor and the dingo, Carter indicated the other man. "This is my right hand, Larry Hayes. Dingoes are his specialty."

The second in command at Noorie station was a lanky gun shearer with muscle-loaded arms. MacLachlan had noticed that when he first saw Delilah, Larry Hayes' bony jaw had tightened. And when the redheaded field officer had introduced himself, Hayes' thin lips had curled scornfully.

The light went out of MacLachlan's face as he felt his fingers crushed in a pulverizing grip that was obviously contemptuous. He flushed, and his freckles were blotted out by rising color. Then he forced a smile. "This is Delilah. She's one of fifteen we've trained from birth. They're our shock troops to run down the worst of the outlaws, like Hoppy. Beautiful job, isn't she?"

The spectacular-looking warrigal lifted pointed ears erect and looked up at her master. Her long tongue agitated between sun-white fang teeth. Wolf-fashion, her eyes were slanted, and as shining black as

her coat. They were intelligent eyes—so intelligent they seemed to understand every word spoken.

"Beautiful," said Larry Hayes slowly, "is one word we don't use to describe a dingo in sheep country, mister. Not when you been out here long enough to get a bellyful of ripped merinos."

"Delilah," MacLachlan said, "is no outlaw—"

"The only beautiful dingo is a dead dingo. If you let that animal out of your sight, mister, I can't guarantee its health."

The room filled with thick silence. Hanging onto his temper, the young field officer stroked Delilah's back. When he finally spoke, he deliberately ignored the gun shearer.

"You own Noorie station, Mr. Carter. Exactly why have you refused to cooperate with the Board? You've lost plenty of sheep to dingoes—and now Hoppy's raiding you."

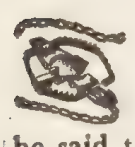
"We can look after our own affairs up here," Larry Hayes interjected coldly, "without the bloody Government sticking its nose in with a bunch of yabbering narks."

"I was asking *you,* Mr. Carter!"

The older man rubbed his chin. "Well, mate, if you want it fair dinkum, that's about the size of it. We don't think Canberra can teach us anything about dingoes. We were fighting 'em up here before some of your politicians were born."

"Sure. And you're still fighting 'em!" MacLachlan uncurled his fingers and took them out of his pockets. "If you and some of the other station owners would cooperate with us, we could wipe out the last sheep-killer in Aussie. Way it is now, when one station makes it too hot for them, they just move on to the next."

"What's the bloody Government so keen about?" sneered the gun shearer. "Not enough votes up here to elect a bullocky."



MACLACHLAN wet his wide lips, reminding himself that he was here on official business. "Maybe it doesn't bother you," he said tightly, "but it bothers the Commonwealth that dingoes in New South Wales alone, for instance, cost over one hundred thousand quid in killed sheep a year!"

"Do I take it," asked Jack Carter incredulously, "that you're up here to catch Hoppy for us?"

"That's right. I'll prove to you that the Board can do things for you that you can't do yourself. If I bring in Hoppy's scalp, I'll expect you to change your mind about cooperating with us."

"I suppose," Hayes grinned unpleasantly, "that your 'beautiful' bitch here goes out, vamps Hoppy and breaks his heart?"

"Something like that," MacLachlan agreed blandly to his detractor's amazement. "Only it's his neck, not his heart. She's trained to pick up his scent from any sheep he's killed. She'll find him and let him get to know her. Then she'll lead him back into a prearranged trap."

The gun shearer's explosive laughter rocked the room. Delilah, stretched full-length on the floor, cocked her head and fixed her black eyes on his face.

"Stone the crows!" Hayes gasped, his broad, hard shoulders shaking with mirth. "Of all the bull's wool! We can't trap Hoppy, we can't shoot him, we can't poison him—so this Government joker brings up a lady dingo to *henpeck* him to death!"

"Does sound a bit crook," agreed Jack Carter, smiling.

"Does it?" Fred MacLachlan was ripping mad now. He checked an urge to drive his fist into the gun shearer's face. The Board couldn't afford that sort of diplomacy. "I've got fifty quid that says Hoppy will be dead in four days. Got the guts to bet?"

"Too right!" Larry Hayes dug gleefully into his pocket and came out with a thick roll of pound notes. "On the line!"

"I won't bet you, mate," Carter said tolerantly, "because I can afford it a lot better than I think you can. But if Delilah here really can do what you say, I'll pay you fifty quid. Be worth it easy to get rid of that three-footed devil."

"And cooperate with the Board?"

The station owner hesitated a moment. Then he nodded.

Fred MacLachlan breathed easier. The animosity he felt for the gun shearer ebbed beneath an expansive delight that his mission had been accomplished. Or as good as accomplished. Delilah had to her credit such killers as the Kimberley Ghost, Old Shaggy, the Myuna Terror and Scratchtail. Hoppy was as cunning as they came—he'd eluded capture for ten

years, slaughtered over a thousand sheep —but he'd never been up against Delilah.

I'll need a day to get her ready," MacLachlan said. "I want her to spot all your traps and baits, and get Hoppy's smell from any sheep he gets at tonight before any hand touches them. Also, please pass the word to the shearers and boundary riders—no shooting at any black dingoes until we leave."

"Nobody'll shoot at your dingo, mister," Larry Hayes promised with easy disdain. "That is—as long as she keeps her teeth out of the sheep."

It was an effort, but the redheaded man didn't reply.

THE dusk closed in softly. Her body growing darker against the deepening range, Delilah turned her head slowly for a last look back at her master. Although he was now dwarfed to the size of a spear of spinifex, she could see his head nod encouragingly.

The lessons of the day were already smoothly integrated into the pattern she had been taught so carefully since birth. The smell of Hoppy was strong in her nostrils. Every detail of the trap her master had selected was vivid in her memory. Forty yards east of the giant baobab tree, at the fringe of a saltbush patch . . . She had practiced the jump across the camouflaged swinging lid of the trap twenty times. She would make it once more—with Hoppy behind her.

The earth, not yet cooled, was burning, stony and prickly beneath her pads. She was used to that. Moving along slowly, inexorably, her angular eyes followed the fine paw-prints in the sandhill she was crossing. One print was always light, barely perceptible—a memento to the paw Hoppy had gnawed off savagely and left behind in a trap, long ago in his greener years.

Abruptly, the vanished sun pulled the hem of its trailing afterglow behind the pointed range. Darkness flooded the valley. Leaping easily over a rabbit fence, Delilah picked her way down a slope littered with bleached deadwood. The evening carol of a shrike throbbed from a distant tree.

Pausing to listen, the black dingo's eyes shone peculiarly. Once again she felt that strange unrest, the unnerving conflict which man's ingenuity and patience could control but never erase. The deepest instincts within her urged the freedom of the bush. But they could only disturb, not destroy, the reflexes of man-made behavior which had shaped her entire life.

In this, her natural land, she was at once at home and yet a stranger. Keenly intelligent, she had long since understood her work, and had never rebelled against it. Not for her the wild lust to kill man's domesticated flocks, for the sheer joy of killing that characterized the dingo outlaw. In a dim way she fathomed the role man had assigned her against her own kind, and accepted it just as she accepted man's love and man's food. Yet each time she ran free in the wilderness of the outback, with man absent except in her mind, temptations tormented her like persistent flies.

After five hours the moon was bright, full and high. Blotting out the stars around it, it bathed the valley in a pale half-light that made the ridge of Delilah's coat shine phosphorescently. A little tired now, she followed Hoppy's trail doggedly as it wound along a grassy hummock studded with granite slabs and boulders. The odor of Hoppy becoming increasingly stronger in her nostrils, she shook off the urge to lie down and rest. Field mice and rabbits scurried out of her way with needless haste. Delilah had been trained to ignore food until she had found her quarry.

Her black coat commingled with shadows of bending gum trees as she trotted past a grove. Then, just as she swung down into open valley once more, she froze in her tracks, her right foreleg lifted tensely. Her ears rose to spearlike points.

Twenty feet away, haunched on wrinkled hindlegs and almost blended into the silvery gray saltbush, a goanna stood immobile. The giant lizard was fully six feet in length from its hard snout to the tip of its powerful spiny tail. Its round black eyes glittered hostilely. So still did it hold that only the fleeting reflex of its eyelids gave evidence that it was alive.

The long, shining hair on the warrigal's back bristled tensely. She wrinkled the black button of her nose, and her teeth were bared. A low, vibrating growl coursed through her body. Any dog, per-

haps a wolf, would have lowered tail and retreated discreetly from so formidable an opponent. But dingoes, despite their reputation as night attackers, are never cowards.

The muscles in Delilah's lithe body grew taut. She waited for the goanna's sudden lunge. It came with the velocity of a hurled spear. Even before Delilah crouched, she had already chosen her target--the soft, baggy underpart of the monster's neck.

And then she flew to meet his charge, her strong jaws parted in hate.

The goanna halted abruptly. Then its immense tail flailed without warning. It smashed against the dingo in mid-air with the impact of iron. Hurled sideways, she crashed to the ground on her back. A shocked yelp of pain escaped from her throat. The reptile, its spine arched and forelegs stiffened with claws outstretched, darted after the wild dog with incredible speed.

Delilah felt sharp talons tear at her throat. The monster's teeth closed on her cheek. Pinned to her side by its muscular hindlegs, Delilah felt sickened and infuriated by the smell of her own blood. In a burst of energy she clawed the horrible thing off and flipped over to regain her feet.

She saw the massive tail swing in time to sidestep its crushing force. And then she sprang once more for its fleshy neck. Both creatures met headlong with open jaws.

As they swayed, neither one giving ground, Delilah felt her ribs contracting under the force of the goanna's powerful forearms.

The leathery muscles of the reptile forced Delilah's head back inexorably. She felt herself falling. Those brutal forearms prevented her from disengaging, held her in the deadly embrace. Then her foothold slipped, and she fell . . .

Weakened, but fighting furiously, Delilah sank her fangs into the goanna's neck until they met. But blood had already blotted out the sight of her left eye. She hung on tenaciously, wincing beneath the ferocious bites and clawing of the monster.

She knew that she must die, but she would kill her enemy as the price of her life, if she could.

SUDDENLY, unbelievably, the goanna released its death grip. Delilah heard a loud, angry snarl—a challenge that growled loudly through the moonlit night and echoed in the distance. She made a valiant effort to get to her feet, but found herself too weak. Reclining and panting, she lifted her head to see out of her clear eye. Then her heart beat triumphantly.

The dingo was formidable. Reddish yellow and shaggy, his head was enormous —more wolf than warrigal. His lithe body had the fit look of the beast who runs far and fast. One paw was missing. Despite the evil odor of the goanna, and the smell of her own blood, Delilah knew instantly that her search was ended.

Although she didn't realize it, Hoppy's sudden appearance was a token of the outlaw's shrewd intelligence. He had heard her outcry when the goanna's tail had lashed her. But he had also heard the howls of trapped dingoes in cages, set before traps to ensnare members of the tribe who answered these calls. Many dingoes had been caught in this fashion, but never Hoppy. Yet he had come to Delilah's rescue—because he intuitively knew this was no trap.

Giant dingo faced giant lizard. The loose-skinned dragon, resembling its fearsome ancestor, the brontosaurus, swayed from side to side as it graced against its tail. Blood ran from its neck where Delilah's teeth had torn the flesh away.

Hoppy snarled and charged. The lethal tail swept toward him in a lightning curve. But the outlaw had fought the goanna before. He leaped nimbly to one side, closed his powerful jaws around the monster's snout in one fast snap, and jerked as he twisted his head. Caught by surprise, the giant lizard was thrown on its back.

In another second, keeping warily out of range of the thrashing tail, Hoppy had sunk fangs deep into the lizard's bleeding wound. He ground his teeth, tore at arteries, ripped the soft neck to pieces with great shakes of his head. Slowly, in spasms of agony, the goanna's stiff forelegs lowered to its body.

And then it lay inert.

A deep rumble of satisfaction issued from Delilah's throat. She stretched ecstatically and yawned. Then, tongue loll-

ing, she lifted herself to her feet with an effort. Hoppy stared at her enigmatically. Slowly he paced to her side. With a low growl that was almost a purr, he licked her wounds gently.

His nose wrinkled suspiciously at the man-smell exuding from her coat. He backed away a few feet, studying her with new doubt. Hoppy hadn't managed to live as long as he had without being overcautious. In all his years he had taken only one mate. He had lost her to a poisoned pigeon bait beside their favorite waterhole. Since that time he had traveled alone, always changing his drinking place.

He had learned to detect the false dingo call of doggers who lay in the scrub with ready rifles. Never was he fooled by their skillful, bellowing imitation of an attacked calf. No succulent offerings of sardines, pigeons or freshly-killed lambs—with their deadly poison—could tempt him. Hoppy knew all the tricks.

But he wasn't sure about this beautiful, black lady dingo he had saved from the vicious goanna. Black dingoes were infrequent enough—but so magnificent a specimen, with a man-smell about her, was a disturbingly strange phenomenon. As he stood there wondering, Delilah paced slowly to the fallen monster and fell to eating.

She was hungry. Her sharp teeth ripped huge chunks from the giant lizard's belly. Somehow Hoppy found the spectacle reassuring. Thrusting his usual wariness aside, he joined her at the feast. In a little while the moonlight reflected from another skeleton in the vast empty land.

His belly full, Hoppy's yellow eyes shone softly out of his long, intelligent face. Then nudging the lady, he nipped the deep fur on her nape playfully. Wheeling, he led the way down a gently rolling slope of knee-high Mitchell grass. Delilah followed obediently, and he took her to a mound spring, bubbling cool and clear beneath tall, tiger-striped eucalypts that glistened eerily. Hoppy blocked her way with his tawny body until he had scanned every inch of ground around the spring for man signs. He had seen too many dingoes threshing frantically in traps set beneath mud in springs, pools and rivers.

Then the two warrigals slaked their thirst, the black beside the yellow. A loud whooshing noise above them made Hoppy lift his head erect swiftly. But it was only a wedge-tailed eagle, the enormous kind that sometimes carried off sheep in its talons, whipping out of one gum tree into another.

Hoppy waited until Delilah had drunk her fill. Then, too wise to rest beside a spring, he led her up a cliff of eroded crags to a sheltered saddle in the rock. Tonight no sheep would fall before his terrible onslaught, either for food or sport. The champion killer of Noorie station had made his decision.

High on the cliff, overlooking rippling sandhills whose red furrows paled in the moonlight, he made the black lady his mate.

THE aftermath of her terrible struggle with the goanna kept Delilah sleeping long after the kookaburra had heralded the first rays of the sun. When she finally opened her eyes, Hoppy was standing patiently over her, his shaggy yellow coat blindingly silhouetted against the morning sky.

She rose sleepily, yawned and stretched her back legs, as Hoppy watched her proudly. He nuzzled against her jaw, and the two dingoes engaged teeth in a playful frisk. Then, still playing, they gamboled together down the cliff onto a vast spinifex prairie that shone like harvest wheat.

The day was full of enjoyment and excitement. Delilah, despite her wounds, had never felt so fully alive. No dingo she had ever run with had been as much fun, so intelligent, tender and fearless as the yellow outlaw, Hoppy.

There had been sport with the blind marsupial mole—that miniature kangaroo with silken fur, horny snout and webbed hind feet. As fast as the mole would furrow, Hoppy would dig him out again, and hold him with one paw to display him to Delilah. But Hoppy had finally left him unhurt in his furrow.

There had been joyously barking pursuits of wallabies, for the sheer delight of watching them bound for their lives. Hoppy, who could have caught them easily if he had really wanted to, would no more have hurt them than he would the sleepy koalas curled far above his head in tree branches.

Once, as they moved across withered table-top hills, Hoppy had barked suddenly and lunged into her, throwing her off her feet. She rose with a hurt, puzzled look in her black eyes. Following Hoppy's stare, she saw what seemed to be an insect wriggling in a patch of soft spinifex. Moving warily closer, her eyes dilated as she saw that the "insect" was a bird lure attached to the tail of a motionless death adder.

Toward evening, having refreshed their steaming bodies at a pool fringed with rushes and alive with birds, they started up hills of angry red and purple. In the distance the running yellow flame of a dust storm grew larger, then freakishly whirled off in a tangent direction.

Hoppy stopped on a hilltop and looked down. Delilah's gaze, following his, saw a flock of stud ewes grazing on a lucerne patch several miles from Noorie homestead. The sight came as a distinct shock to the black dingo. Sheep were man's friends—and Delilah belonged to them. Her body quivered.

They stayed on the hilltop until nightfall. Then Hoppy rose, rested and refreshed. His eyes gleamed as he looked down at the patch of darkness that cloaked but did not shelter his victims. Slowly the reddish ruff of his neck began to bristle, and he held his massive head tensely. Delilah knew by the muscular look of him that he was poised for flight.

Pricking his ears forward, Hoppy sprang down the hill. Halfway down he stopped abruptly, turned, and looked up at her. Delilah, her black coat almost invisible against the night sky, hesitated. Then, a stricken look in her dark eyes, she loped down the sloping underbrush to join him.

Hoppy raced silently across the plain, keeping upwind, with the black dingo behind him. The outlaw moved with the expert silence of the wild hunter, so disarmingly that even when they were within twenty feet of the flock, the sheep gave no sign of alarm.

Delilah stopped dead as she caught her first glimpse of the curving, corrugated horns, the wide nostrils, the thick triple collars of wool. Some of the merinos were dozing, others were nibbling at lucerne. As part of her early training, Delilah had been taught to work sheep, which she had done with all the skill and intelligence of a kelpie, Australia's prized sheep dog.

The protective instincts she had been made to feel toward them now gave full battle to the primitive instincts of her dingo birthright, which the yellow outlaw had aroused. It was a paralyzing experience which Delilah had never known in dealing with other killers. But she had never known a dingo like Hoppy. And with the intense loyalty of her breed, she could not forget that he had come to her rescue against the loathsome goanna.

Hoppy crouched. As though propelled by muscles of steel coil, he shot through the air. The jaws of his great skull were parted as they sank into the soft, yielding neck of a ewe. She let out one tremulous bleat before she died. It was immediately chorused by the rest of the terrified flock, which began to stampede.

Leaving his kill on the ground, Hoppy dashed for another victim. His pale yellow eyes flaring with the joy of the outlaw in action, he lunged into a bawling ewe who lost her footing. With one vicious slash of snarling teeth, Hoppy slit the merino's stomach open. Then he pounced toward a third, and his leap was equally swift, sure and fatal.

AN indefinable terror numbed Delilah's muscles. She shrank from both the spectacle and its gruesome implication. Hoppy, she knew, would expect her to share his food—or as much of it as they cared to eat. But never in her life had she eaten the flesh of man's friend. Intuitively she understood the stockman's grim adage that once a dingo tasted sheep blood, only a bullet would stop it from killing.

Delilah winced beneath the conflicting pressures assailing her reason. She moaned softly in agonizing indecision, a haunted expression creeping into her black eyes. Watching Hoppy anxiously as he killed a fourth, then a fifth helpless sheep, her claws dug rigidly into the earth.

Then, feeling a sudden revulsion, she obeyed the compulsion that had imprisoned her behavior all her life. She uttered a low moan and turned away. With a speed born of desperation, she sprinted around the flock and raced across the prairie, her black body speeding toward Noorie homestead.

A wild cry behind her told her that Hoppy was in full pursuit. She fled as fast as her strongly-muscled limbs would take her, leaping over boulders and through stretches of hard spinifex that resembled an army of gray-green hedgehogs crouching in the sand.

His loud, agonized howling grew louder behind her. Desperation spurred her pounding heart to even more strenuous efforts. Hoppy was throwing all caution to the winds in chasing her—his warning cries could be heard through the valley. The sound of his thudding feet awoke a bombardment of tiny echoes.

Inexorably, as though she were being drawn there by invisible magnetism, Delilah flew straight toward the giant baobab tree at the fringe of a saltbush patch. Even as she did, she was conscious of a tremendous wish to alter her course. In her confusion she was only conscious of a desire to escape from Hoppy and what he represented—but she didn't want him hurt. Yet even stronger than herself was the iron-cast training that had made her man's friend.

Nearer and nearer drew the baobab tree, and forty yards from it, directly in line with Delilah's flight, the camouflaged deep pit. In another few seconds she would reach it, spring over it safely as she had done in twenty practice leaps the day before, while Hoppy, panting a lariat length behind . . .

And suddenly she was upon it. Her reflexes tensed for the leap—but something strange happened. Instead of jumping, she deliberately slowed down. And fully aware of what she was doing, Delilah trotted slowly across the lid of the pit.

The ground gave way beneath her weight, and the black dingo spilled headlong into the pit. The lid swung closed above her, blotting out the stars. In another second she heard Hoppy's heavy breath above the darkness.

A weird, heartbroken howl made her ears ring. The lid banged open and shut slightly as the yellow dingo pushed it angrily with his paw. She heard his teeth bite at the lid in wild rage. Then Hoppy's grief channeled itself into a high, piercing whimper of utter melancholy.

Delilah felt at peace once more. Man's invisible, irresistible force had led her back to the trap. She had come home, as she had been trained to do. But she had compromised by intervening to spare Hoppy, to whom she owed her life, and whom she admired as she had never admired a dingo before. Crouching patiently at the bottom of the pit, she settled down to await morning.

Suddenly she sprang up in alarm as a loud explosion shattered the night above. A gun! Her long, silken hair bristled as she heard a sharp yelp that could only have come from Hoppy. Delilah growled, then howled with all her might. There was a second explosion—and then a third.

"That got the bloody bahstud!" a man's voice exulted. "It's Hoppy, all right! Dingo big as a 'roo! *Must* be Hoppy!"

Delilah snarled and barked furiously. The trap lid suddenly swung open, and she saw the astonished face of Fred MacLachlan. The black dingo's agitation subsided. Lowering her eyes, she whined unhappily.

MacLachlan slid into the pit. Picking Delilah up in his arms he stared at her with disbelieving eyes. Then, without saying a word, he held her with one arm as he climbed out of the pit with the other. Then he set her on the ground, just looking at her without speaking. Delilah's tail went below half-mast.

She followed him meekly past the baobab tree to where four hastily-dressed men stood in a semi-circle around a dead warrigal. Larry Hayes, his gun smelling of sulphur, wore a deeply satisfied grin. As the red-headed field officer approached, the gun shearer's grin broadened.

"Now, *there*, mister," he said, indicating the animal's body at his feet, "is what *I* call a beautiful dingo!"

"Hoppy?" asked Delilah's master quietly.

"Too right, mister! Sorry I couldn't wait for your Government dingo to do the honors. She couldn't very well, could she, from the spot she picked herself!" He burst into a roar of laughter, in which he was joined by the other three men. "Trained dingoes! My bloody oath!"

Color surged into Fred MacLachlan's cheeks. "I wouldn't forget," he said in a voice of steel, "who brought Hoppy here so that you could bring him down with a few pot shots!"

"Who got him, mister—who got him?" taunted the gun shearer. "*I* shot this mur-

dering warrigal, and don't you forget it!" He administered a swift, savage kick to the animal's body. "I've been waiting a bloody long time to do that!" He lashed out with his boot again, and the thud was loud.

DELILAH growled. Every muscle in her tired body stiffened. She sprang at the gun shearer, who knocked her away with one powerful arm and lifted his rifle. He drew a bead between Delilah's eyes as the black dingo wheeled to re-attack.

Fred MacLachlan swung his fist and jolted the rifle to one side, at the same time he leaped forward and seized Delilah in his arms. The gun shearer aimed again.

"Get out of the way, mister!" he snarled. "That dingo's dangerous—you saw that for yourself!"

The man restraining the black dingo thought quickly. He knew Delilah was in a bad spot. Mystified by her behavior, he was nevertheless loyal to the friend he had trained since puppy days. Fred MacLachlan felt the same attachment for Delilah that had brought her home to him in the worst emotional crisis of her life.

"I think this is really between you and me," he said grimly. "Put down that gun, Hayes, and put up your hands. You've been spoiling for a blue ever since I first came!"

"Oh, so it's a stoush you want, is it?" the gun bearer shouted joyfully. "Hold this, mate!" He tossed his gun to one of the men and rolled up his sleeves to reveal powerful forearms to match the muscle-swollen bulges beneath his shoulders.

Scanning the faces of the men around him, MacLachlan quickly selected the one that seemed most "dinkum." Handing Delilah over, he said in a low voice, "Hang on to her, cobber. If—if I can't, please see that she gets safely back to the house."

The man nodded.

Turning to face the gun shearer, who had already lowered his head and raised his arms, the field officer knew he was in for a terrible beating. He was obviously no match for the much more rugged, half a head taller specimen who opposed him. Swallowing hard, he could only hope that the stars would not be bright enough to lend accuracy to the shearer's punches.

The two men circled for a few seconds. Out of the dark shadow that was Hayes' face, the red-haired man could see two piercing eyes, glittering with hatred. He lunged suddenly and caught the shearer a surprise blow on the side of the jaw.

Then Hayes moved in, both arms flailing with deadly power. One punch caught MacLachlan on the forehead, almost stunning him, and a second raised a stinging welt on his cheekbone. A third blow caught him in the stomach like the kick of a mule.

Gasping, the smaller man lashed out gamely with a flurry of blows that landed, but were not strong enough to do much damage. Then he was literally lifted off his feet sideways by a violent explosion under his right ear. He staggered.

A salvo of jabs pressed into his face, drawing blood, and he almost doubled with the pain of the mauling under his heart. In desperation he completely dropped his guard and battered with all his strength at the human storm overwhelming him.

The earth rocked and the sky reeled. He knew it was only a matter of seconds now, but he kept swinging grimly. As he struck his last blow, a lucky one square on the eye, he heard Delilah whine and then a crushing battering ram collided with his chin. Even as his mind whirled out of consciousness he was aware that he had begun to understand why the black dingo had leaped into a pit she knew was there.

When MacLachlan's eyes closed and he dropped, Larry Hayes could have sworn that he saw a trace of a smile on the face of the Government bloke. Somehow it infuriated the shearer, but there wasn't much more he could do to the limp figure on the ground.

"TOO bad about that blue last night," Jack Carter said, smiling as he shook Fred MacLachlan's hand. "But seems to me, from all I've heard, that you asked for it, mate."

"S'truth," agreed the redhaired young man amiably, and the grin made his swollen face ache. "I asked for it, and I got it. No complaints—it was worth it, for reasons I won't go into."

"I can guess." Carter's warm eyes low-

(Continued on page 144)

From nowhere, a white ghostlike form appeared, flapped for a fleeting moment and was gone.

HUNGAR McPHOLLY'S GHOST

By
WILLIAM
WARNER
GRAHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOSEPH A. FARREN

WHEN Hungar McPholly died in his bed at the age of fifty-one, old Preacher Sperrit buried him in the lonely and shadowed plot on the margin of Lost Swamp. Just before he passed away, however, a couple of unfinished bits of business weighed so heavily on McPholly's mind that he called Plato, his only son, who was twenty, and old Sperrit to him.

"Long as memory goes, son, there's always been McPhollys scrabbling round the swamp, and you're the last," he said weakly. "You and Forlorn Burkitt love each other, which is a pretty thing, but her pa's set stubborn. To this my dying day he's never settled that just debt he made on that *unnatural* thing happened back in 'twenty-five, and he's dead set ag'in you marrying his daughter who's a sweet shy

girl. I'm sinking fast and won't last out the moon, but I vow here and now my roaming shade won't never rest a minute until Belew Burkitt gives Lorn to you to carry on the proud McPholly name."

"I'll see can't I hurry things up," Plato said humbly, bemoaning the fact that his pa would not rest in death. "I'll call on Mr. Burkitt first thing past sunup, Pa."

"He's sworn to shotgun any McPholly puts foot on his place," McPholly said. "We're a proud and peaceable family, son, and if you're shotgunned you won't be no good. Give me your sworn word you'll stay off Burkitt's land."

"I give you my sworn word, Pa," said Plato dutifully.

McPholly's glazed eyes twitched to old Sperrit who even then exuded the sweet cloying odor of swamp dew. "Old man, in years past I've favored you like a brother born, and my last great deathbed wish is for you to dig in and help Plato git Lorn for his wife, fair ways or foul. I'm dying but I ain't giving up. Now start my death prayers soft and slow."

While old Sperrit muttered and gurgled sorrowfully, old Doc Wayne pronounced McPholly dead; and they laid him to rest alongside his wife who had passed on two years before.

Of the thirty or so mourners attending the funeral, Mr. Belew Burkitt, although McPholly's nearest neighbor, was not one, having held the deceased in choleric disesteem for going on two decades. The whole swamp, however, knew well how deeply Plato and Lorn Burkitt loved one another; sorrowfully they stood hand in hand beside the shallow grave during the sad ceremony; and that night Lorn's wrathful pa used the strap on her although she was going on eighteen.

"The Burkitts and McPhollys ain't had truck together since Hungar's sow borned that *unhuman* critter back in 'twenty-five." Burkitt glowed angrily as he laid away the strap, however failing to mention the debt still unpaid since that time. "And they ain't starting now! You stay clear of that Plato McPholly!"

FOLLOWING the funeral, Plato dutifully folded the big bed sheets and the pillow case upon which his pa had breathed his last, entrusting them to old Sperrit to bury close to the grave so his pa would feel at home where he was going, which was the custom of the swamp folk.

And that afternoon he worked his corn patch worriedly, for he never doubted a minute his pa would keep his deathbed vow. Old Gubernat McPholly, Plato's great-great-grandpa, and the first McPholly to settle in the swamp, had been an honest man. Old Gubernat had sworn to live to one hundred and seven years, which he had done pridefully with the questionable help of an even dozen wives. Thus he had established an enviable reputation for integrity never approached by any other swamp family, and unblemished it had carried down to the present day. So if his pa vowed his shade would roam the locality, Plato knew it would.

But as no ghosts of any sort had appeared in his lifetime that he could remember, although he thought back hard, Plato wondered what shape his pa's might take. Considering creatures he knew firsthand, he thought maybe a turkey buzzard winging over the cypresses, or a hawk swooping down on chickens. Still pondering the matter in the swift drop of mellow darkness after supper, he locked up his house and met Lorn as usual by the old ash stump in Lovers' Hollow.

It was warm there; a witchbird called mournfully in the distance, and Lorn pressed her slim young quivering body tight against Plato's clean overalls as she kissed him hungrily.

"Can't hardly wait to kiss you, Plato," she whispered, "but pa catches me with you he vows he'll lick the hide off me again like he did today."

"I'd lick your pa, wasn't he so old!" Plato said angrily, for he had been gently raised to give his elders due respect. "You've growed too big and sweet to use the strap on."

"Don't you mix up with pa!" Lorn cried and kissed him warmly, and after a moment, she said, "Pa swears he seen a big white something flapping round the barn at supper, and Preacher Sperrit come by and vowed it's your own pa's ghost. Pa's mighty superstitious about such things."

"I reckon pa wouldn't waste no time," Plato said loyally, "is he really going to haunt your pa. He knowed we love each other, and he swore his shade would roam till your pa gives in to us."

"I'm only yours," said Lorn. "Maybe we could hit it off to somewhere's pa can't get to us."

Sorrowfully Plato shook his head. "Your pa's got to give in, but I can't figure how to make him if I can't go calling on him. And it all began back in 'twenty-five, before I was born, when pa's old sow breached that *unhuman* critter."

Although the story of the curious thing that had happened twenty years before was well known through the swamp, the intervening years had produced several and conflicting versions.

"How was it, Plato?" Lorn asked. "Can't put no trust in how pa tells it."

"Well," said Plato, "it was when pa went to the hogpen that Saturday morning and seen this new pig just borned—"

"MYRT!" Hungar McPholly howled toward the house. "Git out here you wish to see a *unnatural* thing!" His wife came running up the gentle rise toward the barn dabbing at her bright face with her apron. Hungar McPholly was a powerful man, broad of shoulder, face and humor, and with his hat shoved back he scratched his head quizzically as Myrtle leaned over the bars of the hogpen.

"Hungar!" she cried, aghast. "I've never seen the like!"

"Me neither!" Hungar whacked his thigh. "Wait till I joke Belew Burkitt on it!"

"Burkitt ain't a joking man," warned Myrtle sharply.

"Time he's a-starting!" Hungar roared. "I'll joke him!"

And so he could hardly wait until afternoon when they drove the old Ford three miles to town.

Now, as usual on Saturday afternoons, everybody was in town. And while Myrtle shopped around and gossiped, Hungar strode purposefully into the Outlet Store which was a big, smelly, crowded place. Looking around he spied Belew Burkitt, a huge red-faced man, and sour-looking as the reputation for stinginess he had built up about the countryside. Turning to Ed Harmon, the proprietor, Hungar stated in a loud voice, "Seen a miracle this morning, Ed—yes, sir, a miracle, and in my own hogpen too!" Gravely he looked at Doc Wayne and Preacher Sperrit and at the others there. "This morning my old sow borned two pigs—two pigs, mind you, but *both of 'em borned inside one body!*"

Talk exploded pro and con. Belew Burkitt palmed the top of his bald head while his little eyes grew shrewd.

"Nobody ain't never seen two pigs borned inside one body," he yapped out testily, "and never won't!"

Hungar McPholly shrugged. "Anybody wants to lay a little bet . . ."

"What you laying?" demanded Burkitt sharply.

Again McPholly shrugged, and he turned disinterestedly away. "It's you should name it, seeing you don't care to take my sayso."

"Ten gallons of my best ag'in ten dollars!" Burkitt came back quickly, which was a fair enough wager as Burkitt ran his own whiskey in his still hidden deep in Lost Swamp.

So McPholly gravely laid his ten dollars with Preacher Sperrit and turning to Burkitt, said, "You can carry them ten gallons to my house Monday, Belew."

Three loaded Fords took off from town. During the dusty jolting ride there was much loud speculation, but McPholly stuck to his tale and Burkitt argued mightily. After circling the neat one-story house, the three cars halted close to the hogpen where McPholly got out. And when he carried the pig from the barn where he had put it, the squall that roared up from the men viewing the outlandish creature—for it was a two-headed pig—was heard all the way to town. Preacher Sperrit's howl was loudest, but Belew Burkitt did not laugh. He foamed and he fumed and, in fact, the way his red face swelled to twice its normal size made Doc Wayne believe he'd have a stroke.

"You're sly and no 'count, McPholly," he exploded in violent anger, "a-saying two pigs was borned inside one body! Don't never leave me catch you on my land ag'in, nur your young 'uns neither when you git 'em! I'll shotgun you if I do."

After which he staggered home and lay abed three days. And thenceforth, whenever Hungar McPholly met him on the street or in the store or wherever and claimed the unpaid debt, Belew Burkitt spat with venom and passed him by.

"THAT'S how pa told it," Plato said, "and he wasn't a lying man. Your pa never settled that debt and now he's against us marrying."

Lorn kissed him yearningly. "Wish pa would give in. Ain't decent, don't seem like, us loving each other so much and not being together."

Plato walked almost home with Lorn before they parted sadly. And it was the following afternoon that Burkitt's sow littered three pigs, one of which astoundingly had two heads!

Now this was most unusual. Two-headed pigs were scarce as froghair anywhere. Of course, it could just have happened as things do, but really who could tell. And Belew Burkitt, recalling the other two-head as he apprehensively viewed the fantastic creature in his hogpen, was in no mood for happenstance. Figuring it smacked of hellfire and the supernatural, Burkitt swore McPholly had laid an evil curse on him before he died, and that his ghost—which he'd seen scrabbling over his barn—had bewitched the sow into producing freaks. So he spaded out a hole, spat three times into it, killed the pig with the wood axe and buried both axe and pig. He filled the hole and burned the spade, then drove the surprised sow to town as fast as he could go and sold her to Deputy Sheriff Shad Rack.

The story, with embellishments, got around. Three days later in the store, Plato learned a man had come all the way from Jacksonville by bus to purchase the two-head for a carnival, and had gone off fuming at the thick-headed ignorance of some folk when he learned the pig had been done away with. But he wasn't near as mad as her own tight-fisted pa, Lorn told Plato that night when they met at the old stump in Lovers' Hollow.

"Fit to be tied, pa was," Lorn said, after she had kissed Plato warmly. "He swears the evil spell your pa laid on him made him kill that pig when he could of sold it for big money, and he's going to ask Preacher Sperrit what to do to get shut of your pa's ghost for good.

Now it had been whispered through the swamp for years that old Sperrit took strange spells and sometimes spoke queer things; but as no man would admit witnessing the one or hearing the other, he was mostly considered harmless unless he bore a grudge. And althought he had had no church to preach in for much too long to remember, he married and buried folk when the need arose, and he would, when approached with proper respect by a man in trouble, give out shrewd advice.

"Once your pa had old Sperrit locked up for carrying on in town," Plato told Lorn worriedly, for a disquieting thought had wedged itself into his mind, "and it was my own pa got him out of jail. If your pa's fool enough to do what old Sperrit says do, he'll likely get in real trouble."

Next day Plato went to town. As he hadn't seen old Sperrit since he'd given him his pa's bedding to bury, he wondered what the old man was doing to accomplish his pa's last deathbed wish, for it wasn't like old Sperrit to forget such matters. And in the store he heard more tales.

McPholly's ghost, Burkitt swore, was plaguing him out of his mind, although one town faction discounted this as a loose statement; a man, they argued, couldn't lose what he'd never had. However, Burkitt swore the ghost was big as a barn, white as milk, with arms and legs twenty feet long anyway, and coming and going as it did it made a scary whooshing sound, indeed like no human sound ever heard on earth before. In addition to frightening his sow into birthing unhuman critters, it had run off his horse, dried up his cow, set the chickens to roosting high in the trees, put a blight on his sales of eggs and pork and untaxed whiskey, and, of course, it kept him from his rest. In a fit of desperation he had offered fifty dollars reward, Plato heard with alarm, to any man who would rid him of the spook.

NOW all this sounded just about the way his pa would handle things when he really got down to business, Plato was forced to admit, for his pa had been an imaginative and energetic man. But it worried him because he could see his pa wasn't getting any rest, and then he began studying about the big reward. Fifty dollars would draw many a dead shot to lay in wait at Burkitt's, and it hurt Plato's pride to think his pa's shade might unfeelingly be riddled with buckshot. So when

he finally located old Sperrit on the stoop of his unpainted shack, he told the old man straight out what he feared and asked his advice.

"Son," old Sperrit cackled, "you just leave things be," and he swigged happily from his bottle after, of course, pouring Plato a friendly drop. He was rail thin and straight as a pine, and his clothes were rags. But his white hair was thick and wiry, and a bounding energy lit his bright watery blue eyes. "We both heard your own pa say his shade would roam until Burkitt give in to you and Lorn. Burkitt won't rest a minute, neither!"

"Well, pa ain't resting," said Plato unhappily. "Now they're fixing to ambush him."

"Alive your pa looked out for hisself," old Sperrit said, "and dead, I reckon he still is."

"Beside that reward," said Plato, "Burkitt's coming to you to find out how to really get shut of pa's shade."

"I'll tell him—I shorely will!" squalled old Sperrit. "When he had me locked up once it was your own pa sprung me and I ain't forgot." He took a long and pleasant swig from his bottle and eyed it lovingly. "Know where I got this liquor at? Out of Burkitt's own barn loft. He's finished a-running his still and his loft's chock spang loaded to the roof. But that spook a-swooping round he's watchful and don't sleep day nur night, and I can't git to that loft so easy any more. Figure I got me a way, though, to git me a new supply."

Well, Plato left the old man without having got much useful information, and in town he ran into Deputy Shad Rack, who declared, "Burkitt keeps spreading them crazy tales about ghosts flying round his house, I'll be bound to lock him up. He's giving the whole countryside a evil name!"

So that afternoon while he worked his corn patch, Plato kept a mighty sharp lookout around because it might be he would see his own pa's shade himself, and if so he meant to warn it firmly about the fifty dollar reward. But no phantoms flapped into his line of vision, not even a buzzard, chicken hawk or heron—only old Sperrit cutting crookedly through the swamp. So after supper he locked up and met Lorn in Lovers' Hollow where they clung together. Lorn's pale hair smelled sweet as wild honey, her eyes were stars, her lips were warm, and inside him Plato felt a terrible yearning ache.

"Pa talked to Preacher Sperrit," Lorn told him, kissing him at the same time, "and he said he reckoned your pa was riled about them ten gallons pa owed him since back in 'twenty-five. So before we et, pa set out ten jugs beneath that big oak away from the house, and after supper when he looked, they was plumb gone!"

"Where'd they go to?" Plato demanded.

"Your pa's ghost drug 'em off, pa says."

"Old Sperrit's a fool!" cried Plato angrily. "Although pa wasn't never a real drinking man, was it sure enough his ghost drug off that liquor, I reckon he won't be in no shape to do much haunting right soon again! We just ain't getting nowhere."

Plato's sleep that night was interrupted by a muted banging and whacking in the distance. And next morning in town he learned what the to-do was about.

Lured from miles around by the fifty dollar reward, twenty-five men—not one from the swamp, however, who had known Hungar McPholly—had lain hidden with guns at Burkitt's place the previous night, and when a big white something flapped past the barn, they had all let go with both barrels. Not only had they wrecked the barn roof, they'd knocked seventeen hens and three roosters off their high perches in the trees, as well as blasted a big white heron winging peacefully south. And when twenty of the twenty-five loudly claimed the reward, declaring the white heron was McPholly's ghost, Burkitt angrily refused to pay off. So they'd raided his barn loft and the party lasted all night long.

WHEN he visited his pa's grave that afternoon to see if it had been disturbed, and to place fresh myrtle on his ma's which lay alongside, Plato found the ground solid and untouched, all but one spot about twenty feet away which looked recently worked over. Digging, he uncovered some jugs of whiskey; as there were only nine jugs left of the ten Burkitt had set out in settlement of his debt, Plato knew his pa had buried them there where he could get at them easily. Which was reasonable enough. A ghost, of course, could sink through solid ground over its

grave without a trace, but jugs of whiskey were different, and he left them where he found them.

"I've about give up hope of us ever carrying on the McPholly name," Lorn told him miserably that night and kissed him.

"I'd go to see your pa right now—"

"Don't you do it!" Lorn cried, clutching him tight. "Pa'll gun you like he swore to do!"

"I just can't stand this!"

"But was you to get killed, Plato," Lorn whispered sadly, "I couldn't kiss you no more!"

Well, it was only because he'd given his pa his word he wouldn't that Plato hadn't called on Belew Burkitt before now, and he didn't know what to do. And it was then, staring worriedly off through the dark trees that he saw the night sky light up toward town.

"Lookatherel" he cried.

"It's pa!" Lorn gasped. "Preacher Sperrit told him to bundle up his overalls and stuff he wore when he killed that pig, soak 'em in kerosene and set it all afire in the hogpen! Said it was bound to rid him of your pa's ghost!"

Moment by moment as they watched, pressed tight together, the sky brightened, until Plato cried, "Gosh-a'mighty! He must of set the whole place afire!" and they started running hand in hand.

Burkitt's barn was blazing when they reached it. Twenty or thirty men were battling frenziedly at the flames, carrying water from the cistern, beating with wet sacks, but Plato knew this would not do much good. Burkitt himself was storming and ranting and rushing about in high dudgeon as the fire leaped skyward, and he kept flinging his arms helplessly toward the loft. Now this was the first time Plato had set foot on Burkitt's land since he'd given his pa his word he wouldn't, and it would have been disquieting had he had time to think about it. But, of course, he didn't. For just then there appeared from nowhere in the high loft opening a white ghostlike form which flapped for a fleeting moment, then was gone.

"That dang ghost done it!" Burkitt squalled above the crackling roar of flames. "And I'll git it!"

There's pa, thought Plato. But as he had never laid eyes on his pa's ghost before, and it was come and gone so fast, he wondered if it had really been there at all. As he turned to ask somebody he saw Burkitt struggling to raise a ladder to the loft doorway and, when he had it set, climb madly. Momentarily then, Burkitt's immense bulk was silhouetted by the harsh glare coming from within before it disappeared, and clutching Plato, Lorn shrilled her deep grief. But immediately Burkitt reappeared carrying dark shining jugs which he heaved heedlessly out, so Plato guessed with immense relief his pa's shade had somehow got away.

This went on for several minutes while the fire licked higher and until, suddenly, Burkitt bellowed wildly from the loft and flung his arms.

Plato whirled. Halfway up an oak tree some fifty yards distant, a big white figure swarmed among the dark branches, but even as Plato's eyes popped out, it faded from his sight.

Now, although he didn't know very much about ghosts, never having seen one before, Plato figured that what went up must come down sometime, so he grabbed Lorn's hand and started running for the tree. Others were headed that way too, but when they reached its base, to their chagrin only old Sperrit was hopping up and down and pointing skyward.

"Seen it my ownself!" he shrilled. "Up in that there tree!"

Anxiously Plato peered upward. But it was too dark among the high branches to make out much of anything so he let go of Lorn's hand and started climbing. Just then, however, came a high shout, and he swung around scarcely in time to see the sidewalls of the barn collapse allowing the roof to fall with a roar, sending embers and pretty sparks high into the night. He gasped and ran, and he reached the blazing pile first and pulled Burkitt from the fallen timbers, so although he was where he had promised his pa he wouldn't go, he had done some good. Burkitt was not dead. In fact, the way he howled they knew he still had plenty of life in him, but he was badly scorched and could not walk.

So they carried him into the house and got him into his bed which creaked and shuddered with his enormous weight, and old Doc Wayne, who never missed a fire, punching and poking discovered he had a broken leg which he soon had set. When

everyone had left the room but Lorn and Plato, it became quieter. Through a window beside the bed came a soft reddish glow which touched Burkitt's little eyes burned deep in their bunched fleshiness as they lay on Plato who stood silently with Lorn.

"I swore to shotgun any McPholly ever set foot on my place," said Burkitt bitterly.

"You can't shotgun nobody now," Plato said, which was true, for old Doc Wayne had used the shotgun for a splint when he set the leg.

"I paid out them ten gallons I owed your pa," said Burkitt shuddering, and the big bed creaked and groaned, "but his dang ghost still plagues me day and night."

"You just ain't sensible," said Plato, and saw old Sperrit creep into the room.

"Sensible!" Burkitt groaned with pain. "Ghosts flying round, two-headed critters, my horse, cow, chickens, my barn burned down, my busted leg ain't sensible—"

"Burned your own barn—busted your own leg!" yelped old Sperrit. He winked a watery eye at Plato and slid silently out of the room.

WHILE Burkitt mumbled, Plato knew it was high time he gave his pa's shade some help, and although he hated to take advantage of a helpless man in pain, he figured he had better speak out.

"Mr. Burkitt," he said gravely, "on his deathbed pa vowed he wouldn't rest until you let Lorn marry me—"

"You saved my life, but I ain't never leaving my darter marry any no-good McPholly!"

Burkitt gave a burbling cry. Struggling up he reached madly toward the window where, in the pulsing glow from the dying fire outside, a huge white ghostly figure flapped to the harsh tune of an unearthly whooshing that twanged the nerves. As Plato hurled himself out of the room, the figure took off skyward in a surprising manner, and Burkitt, babbling incoherently, fell back quivering on the bed.

As he rounded a corner of the house, Plato heard a yelp that sounded like a coondog at a tree, and he came on old Sperrit bounding up and down and pointing toward the roof.

"Just flapped up and on and over and gone!" he shrieked, and took off in a running leap.

Circling the house warily, but without result, Plato went inside again where Lorn clutched him. "You get hold of it?"

"Got away," said Plato, "but old Sperrit's after it," and doggedly he faced the bed. "Lorn and me loves each other, Mr. Burkitt, and I'm saying out right now we're marrying to carry on the McPholly name."

Burkitt's agony of both body and mind was plain as anything, and it could have been that Plato standing up to him at last produced additional anguish. He closed his eyes and he sucked a breath, and when he let it out, his huge body beneath the tortured sheet seemed to sink into the depths of unutterable despair.

"I held out going onto twenty years because I'm a stubborn man," he sighed dismally, "but I can't fight no plaguing ghost! Take Lorn to wife as a McPholly and make her happy, son, or I'll shotgun you like I swore to do anyway. You got my blessing. Now git out and leave me git my rest."

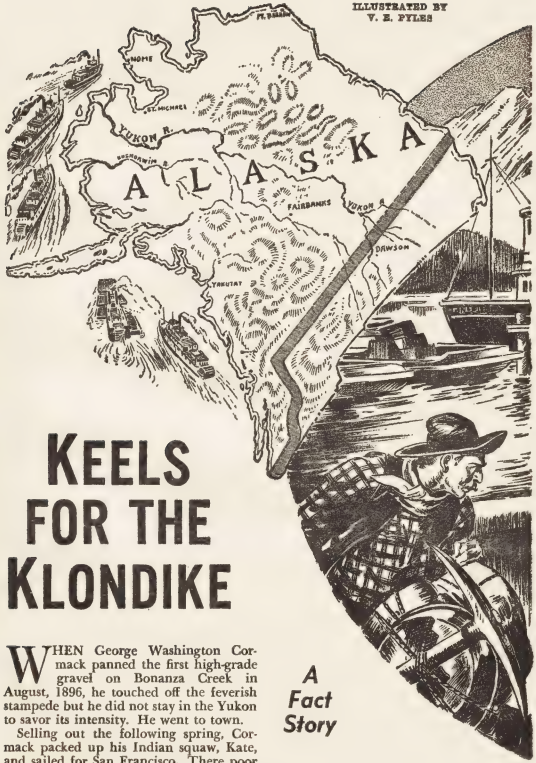
Outside in the black darkness, Lorn held Plato tight, and she whispered timidly, "You reckon Preacher Sperrit will marry us right off? Seems like I just can't wait no longer to start kissing you day and night both."

"Reckon he will," said Plato. "Won't nobody likely see pa's shade again."

And indeed, although the swamp folk still tell the story, never again was Hungar McPholly's ghost seen in the locality, or anywhere else for that matter. Mr. Belew Burkitt had settled the debt he had made in 'twenty-five, of ten gallons of his best; he had given his only daughter Forlorn to Plato to perpetuate the proud McPholly line. Thus was Hungar McPholly's last deathbed wish accomplished, allowing his shade to seek its rightful rest. Or such, I'm told, is the prevailing belief.

But in the deep, deep throbbing darkness late that moonless night, with a witchbird calling mournfully at a lonely spot close on the swamp's margin to where several gallons of good whiskey had been cached, a sorrowful old ghost of a figure dug silently to bury, as was the custom cherished thereabouts, two ripped sheets and ragged pillow case.

ILLUSTRATED BY
V. E. PYLES



KEELS FOR THE KLONDIKE

A Fact Story

WHEN George Washington Cormack panned the first high-grade gravel on Bonanza Creek in August, 1896, he touched off the feverish stampede but he did not stay in the Yukon to savor its intensity. He went to town.

Selling out the following spring, Cormack packed up his Indian squaw, Kate, and sailed for San Francisco. There poor Kate was confused by the maze of corridors

"I understand you're afraid to proceed with the voyage," Moran bellowed. "Pack your duffel."

By CARL HORN

and identical doors in the bay city hotel. With primitive directness she grasped a red fire axe and blazed a back trail from room to street to guide her return to the newly rich gold king's "lodge" on the top floor.

However, with this one bizarre exception, the greatest splurge of gold-rush money was in Seattle.

Two days later—while Cormack was repairing the damage to the hotelry with part of his fortune—the second ship out of Alaska with returning sourdoughs approached Seattle. Loaded to the gunwales with sixty miners, a ton and a half of gold dust, and fantastic but tantalizing tales of easy wealth, the steamer *Portland* nosed in to the Schwabacher pier on July 17, 1897.

Only two newsmen and a delivery boy stood on the wharf. But the morning paper lay on the front porches of the depression-hit city, the headline screaming, *Gold Ship at Port Townsend. Due About 6 A. M.* In a few minutes the clatter of hooves resounded in the streets as every hack in Seattle plunged seaward. It was a surge toward the waterfront which continued intermittently for two full years.

Coarse gold and nuggets, not difficult dust, lay in the frozen creek gravels of the Klondike district in Yukon Territory. The miners proved it with specimens. Tired of staving off hunger with clams, most of Seattle's forty thousand people gasped and many rushed. A few men looked, listened, shook their hard heads, and went back to work.

ROBERT MORAN, thirty-nine-year-old proprietor of a wood and steel ship-building and repair industry, watched a handful of his employees return to the shops. His yard had had its beginning in a machine shop on the old Yesler wharf in 1882, capitalized with the sixteen hundred dollars Moran had saved during seven years of steamboating in Puget Sound, British Columbia, and Alaskan waters. In the next seven years he had seen his venture grow to a forty thousand dollar concern—only to be completely obliterated in the fire of 1889.

The pride of his life had burned furiously, the heavy machinery plopping into the blue harbor as its owner, then Seattle's mayor, hastily organized fire-fighting brigades in the business section of the wooden city. Hardly had self-conscious Seattle rebuilt in stone and steel when repercussions of the panic of 1893 drew the pins from under her adolescent economy. Moran's belt had been as tight as anyone else's for three long years when the steamer *Portland* arrived with news of gold in the Yukon, the Alaskan back door.

Moran looked over his ship-building plant, now incorporated as Moran Brothers Company, and he knew the depression was broken. Man would move toward gold. By whichever of two routes the gold-seeker at Seattle traveled ultimately to the Klondike district, he could not avoid beginning his journey by ship. And Moran Brothers built, refitted, and repaired ships. As the gold rush made up in Seattle, prosperity would inevitably ride its crest.

Steamers and sailboats, schooners, brigs, and barkentines—every available craft on Puget Sound hove into Seattle. Then came ships from the entire Pacific Coast. And finally they got under way from New England and New York, via the Horn. Every day, overloaded vessels sailed out of the harbor, bound toward the gold diggings. Still prospectors fought for passage, and freight piled up along Seattle wharves and streets.

Amateurs were building boats on the beaches. Hastily formed syndicates were throwing steamers together in yards. Moran Brothers built just as fast as short crews could work. Their foundry and machine shops clanged with a steady production of boilers, engines, and pumps, as well as such odd items as thawing machines and drills for working frozen ground in the Northland.

With luck those who got aboard steamers before the end of July could steam north across the Pacific, through the Aleutian islands, up the Bering seacoast, to St. Michael, where they might transfer to a Yukon River steamer and be transported to Dawson to begin seeking their diggings. After the first of August, however, the danger of being frozen in on the thousand-mile river trip was too great. The ice did not go out again until the following June.

Failing to get passage on an early ship, the prospector was forced to take the short-cut, which thousands preferred anyway. By this route, he took ship at Seattle for Skagway or Dyea, then back-packed over Chil-

koot Pass or White Pass, six hundred miles to Dawson. Mountains of ice and snow, arctic lakes, rivers, and the madcap White Horse Rapids all lay in his way. By map it looked simpler than the long Yukon voyage. He could start without waiting for spring.

Thousands tried. Some died on the passes, or drowned in the rapids. Many lost their equipment en route, only to be turned back at the Canadian border by Mounties for lack of supplies necessary for subsistence. A few hundred got through to the Klondike to join those already feverishly prospecting.

Typical tales of snow-packed trails littered with discarded equipment and provisions floated into Seattle. Easy losers told of one trip north on a fishing boat built for a crew of twenty and loaded with two hundred Argonauts. Meals had been served in washtubs on filthy decks to a motley group who dipped with their hands knowing full well it was that or go hungry.

Obvious to Seattle civic leaders and business men was a plain hard fact—more men than food to keep them alive would reach Dawson before spring. Another horde of gold seekers would pour in during the summer of 1898. Some means of supplying the district must be settled and in execution before the ice went out of the Yukon in June.

The challenge of stepping up the Yukon River transport was turned over to Bob Moran. Two experimental river boats began to take shape in frame at the yard. These shallow-draft sternwheelers, of 175-foot length and 35-foot beam, boasted barge-like hulls and boxy superstructures to carry a maximum of freight through the short northern summer season.

The two steamers were then knocked down and packed aboard ocean steamers for immediate delivery at Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians. Accompanying them were their high pressure, non-condensing engines, boilers, and fittings, plus a gang of mechanics who set up and rigged the vessels during the winter months. Skippered under their own power thence to St. Michael, the two steamers were able to bring early summer food relief up the Yukon.

Satisfied with reports in mid-January, Moran had twelve more identical steamers set up in a row on the Seattle tide flats. To complete the fleet, the company also was constructing six river freight barges. During the months of clamorous building, Moran perfected his own plans for delivery of the vessels into Yukon River service.

A skeptical civic leader shook his head. "You'll never get those craft up there," he said to Moran. "Come a williwaw and they'll skid right off the ocean. Nobody ever took a river fleet on an ocean voyage like that."

"No," Moran answered. "So far as I know nobody ever did, yet. There's no such sea voyage on record. But there's always a first time." He winked. "We're decking in the entire bows with 'whalebacks' against heavy weather."

"But they'll ride like sitting ducks."

"We'll ballast them with fuel for those boilers. It'll hold them down," Moran answered.

"Are they going under their own power? Those boilers are for fresh water service."

"Temporarily they'll be equipped with surface condensers and circulating pumps to guard against salt water getting into the boilers on the voyage."

The man shook his head. "If they get blown on the rocks or out to sea, nothing—"

"They won't," Moran broke in. "I've chartered three ocean-going tugs to haul us out of trouble."

"You won't get a pilot with all this shipping going on."

Moran smiled. "I've already got one—Edward Lennan, and there's none better on the coast. It's more trouble to select crews. Thousands of adventurers think the trip will be a cheap joyride to the gold fields. How'd you like the job of selecting two hundred reliable men and twelve captains out of the mob that hits Seattle every day?"

"Not me." The man looked closely at Moran's face. "Say, do you have to carry all this yourself?"

"No," Moran answered. "The United States Shipping Commission signs the crews for the voyage. Lloyd's of London are insuring us for safe delivery at St. Michael, for half-a-million dollars. Costs us twenty-four thousand, but it's worth every cent."

"Well, you seem to have an answer to everything, but I'm glad it isn't my worry."

OVER twenty-one hundred men were on the company's payroll that winter, some of them already returned from a spasmodic try at the Yukon Trail. In early June the twelve steamers rode at anchor in Seattle, complete from stem to stern, including engines and boilers.

But Bob Moran doubted if he knew all the answers yet. No matter how much confidence he had in a ship of his own design, her seaworthiness still had to be proved. Fifteen hundred cords of dry four-foot wood was needed as fuel on the voyage, but few men would cut wood when a gold rush was on. He sent an inspector up the Sound to spot dry cordwood, while ten tons of foodstuffs were stowed on the steamers. The fuel was located, but in small batches. Then the steamers were sent out to pick it up. Their lower holds were stuffed with boiler feed which appeared to serve as a life preserver. It was improbable that a ship would sink while packed solid with dry wood.

The twelve steamers were to meet their convoy tugs and a freight barge at Roche Harbor in the San Juan Islands. This port had the most convenient northerly customs house from which clearance could be made. With his pilot, clerk, and stenographer, Moran joined the fleet there and took over command from the deck of his "flagship," the *Pilgrim*.

He knew he still had to gamble on three unknowns, the weather, the ocean, and human nature.

Customs cleared, the fleet of sixteen vessels steamed for the Comax Coal Mines in British Columbia, where each steamer took thirty tons of coal on deck and settled down for the voyage up the sheltered Inside Passage. By way of Wrangell and Juneau, routine and uneventful days passed until the flotilla left Cross Sound to enter the Pacific Ocean. The rolling swell gave them a taste of what was to come. Moran watched his men.

The steamers rocked and pitched but they made the fine harbor at Yakutat without grief. Moran announced a three-day layover there to give engineers and crews time to overhaul before beginning the extended ocean crossing. The crews seemed to be taking the voyage in the same spirit of adventure as he was himself. Then without warning mutiny struck.

At nine o'clock next morning a small boat bumped alongside the *Pilgrim*. A large sealed legal-looking envelope was passed up to the fleet commander. A "sea-lawyer" protest against continuing the voyage because of obvious danger to life and property had been framed by two of his ship captains. Moran scowled. With half-a-million dollars' worth of property on his hands, contracted for delivery at St. Michael by a certain date, he was summarily directed to abandon immediately his efforts to fulfill his agreements.

Delay would be disastrous. In a three-day layover, this fear of proceeding could spread and undermine the morale of the whole fleet. The harder Moran thought the more convinced he became that this rebellion was still in the bud. His knowledge of the crews prompted him to think that this apprehension had arisen with the two captains only and was not yet general. But he would have to gamble on his judgment of men. He decided to proceed immediately.

"Take the ship's boat," he said to his clerk, "and notify all captains but these two, to have steam up to leave the harbor in two hours."

Moran climbed down to a small boat himself and boarded the ship of one of the protesting captains.

"I understand you are afraid to proceed with the voyage," Moran bellowed at the skipper.

"Yes, sir, I—" he began but Moran didn't give him time to finish.

"You don't have to proceed," he broke in. "Pack your duffel and I'll personally escort you to a safe harbor. The mailboat for Seattle will pick you up within thirty days. At that you'll be home earlier than expected."

Before eleven o'clock the two mutinous captains stood on the beach of the dour Alaskan coast. Mates had been promoted to captains in their places, and deckhands to mates. Promptly at eleven the fleet steamed out of the harbor to proceed up the coast without the precautionary overhaul.

Outwardly all seemed well to Moran. It remained to be seen if a good stiff blow could burst morale, or ship, at the seams.

When the flotilla approached the waters of Cook Inlet, the fierce williwaw caught them broadside. No shelter whatever

broke the force of the cruel wind. Inching along, they managed to struggle into Shelikof Strait.

Hour after hour the three orange-colored tugs battled the storm desperately, chasing down battered and drifting steamers to try to tow them back to their anchorages.

Before dawn the storm got the best of the tugs. They could not recover the river boats fast enough.

Onto the rocks near Katmai, cracked the steamer *Western Star*. Swatted by the vicious gale, she was soon pounded into a total loss. Between them the tug captains managed the lines which brought all hands off safely. But instead of discouraging the men, Moran was pleased to note, the storm had roused a new sense of solidarity among them. (Months later he heard that the Indians from Katmai Mission had salvaged sufficient timbers from the *Western Star* to build themselves a little wilderness church.)

The balance of the fleet fought its way toward Dutch Harbor, taking shelter from the pounding seas at various inlets along the Aleutian peninsula. Once through the strait, into the Bering Sea, they hugged the shallow shore, sparing their shortening fuel.

Luck was with them again. On the shore of Bristol Bay, they were able to locate the legendary natural outcrop of a coal seam. All hands fell to with crowbars.

Refueled, they steamed onward to St. Michael and the Yukon, completing a voyage of four thousand miles in forty days, to fulfill Moran's contract. Prosperity was assured his once struggling shipyard when Lloyd's gladly made good the loss of one ship.

Still the Klondike gold-rush was making up in Seattle. Moran returned to find the city mushroomed with new industries, preparing foodstuffs in compact form, making portable houses, and manufacturing dozens of new contraptions, useful or not for camp life and placer mining. Schools for panning, rocking, and dog-sledding flourished. Old-timers grinned. Today they slap their thighs and insist that the gold-rush *made* Seattle.

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ILLUSTRATED BY PETER KUHLHOFF

CHARLEY HOE HANDLE VS. MAN'S BEST FRIEND

By JIM KJELGAARD

Runnin' wasn't goin' to do him no good—the dog could run as far and as fast as Charley could.

NOW Horse Jenkins, the warden of Stick County, didn't have no use for dogs unless they was good. But Horse knowed that the dog he was leadin' down Beaver Junction's street was all right. It was a big, short-haired black and tan dog, and its face was so wrinkled and mournful that it seemed it couldn't be man's, or anything's, friend. It looked like a hound, but it wasn't like no hound what had ever been saw in Stick County.

"Hey, Horse," says Burry Markisson, owner and operator of Markisson's Super-Service, "what sort of dog is that?"

"Pure-bred Mooch Hound," Horse says, snappish-like. "I had it imported from Mooch Houndia."

Burry, who knowed he wasn't goin' to

get no more than that out of Horse, scratched his head and turned back to the tire he was fixin'. Horse, he figgered, had plans he wasn't tellin'.

And Burry was dead right. For thirty years back, every warden what had come to Stick County had been tryin' to ketch Charley Hoe Handle. Every one of them had been out-smarted. Charley, slicker than a trap-pinched wolf, knew every trick there was and invented others when he needed 'em. It wasn't no use to waylay Charley, he could smell a ambush four miles off. It wasn't no use to try to trick him, Charley always come up with a better trick. No man ever born could follow a trail that old Injun laid in the bush . . .

Horse took the dog into his office, fed it a couple of pounds of hamburger, and smiled to hisself. Maybe no man could follow Charley's trail.

But a trained bloodhound could.

TWO days later Charley Hoe Handle hisself was settin' beside his shanty thinkin'. What he was thinkin' about was that there was an awful lot of feed this year and everything was good. Especially partridges was good—and fat. Havin' thought that much, Charley went into his shanty, got his .22 pistol, and stuck it down his pants leg. It didn't make no difference that the legal openin' of partridge season was six weeks away.

Nor did Charley Hoe Handle bother with lookin' around before he left. So many wardens had laid in the brush or up on the ridges and watched him leave his shanty that it was gettin' monotonous. But, once Charley was back in the trees, and hid by them, he doubled in the opposite direction. A half mile farther on he swerved again. Now, though anybody who'd watched him leave his cabin would of swore that he was goin' due north, he was headin' straight south. Finally Charley started huntin'.

He heard a scratchin' and a diggin' in the leaves ahead, and crawled up thataway. Sure enough, a flock of partridges was eatin' beechnuts. Charley took careful aim, shot, and got a nice big one through the head. The rest flew, but Charley didn't much care. He liked to hunt this way, and he'd got the biggest, fattest bird in the flock anyhow. The next flock he passed up because they was all young ones, but he picked another out of the flock after that and, an hour afterwards, he got a third. Three was all he wanted, and Charley was ponderin' ways to get back to his cabin when he kind of thought somethin' was behind him.

Charley Hoe Handle had had such thoughts before, and he had stayed out of jail for thirty years because he always paid some heed to 'em. He melted behind a tree and watched. Two minutes later, and about three hundred yards away, Charley seen Horse Jenkins comin' with a big black and tan bloodhound. The dog's head was in the air. He was strainin' against the leash.

Charley knowed he had body scent.

Now, beside Horse Jenkins, Charley Hoe Handle was prob'ly the only man in Stick County who knowed bloodhounds and what they can do. Forty years ago, when Charley was a ten-year-old kid, a lot of people what had reason for stayin' away from police had laid out in the Stick County bush. They had been routed out of there with bloodhounds.

A good bloodhound can follow a twenty-four-hour-old trail and do it easy. They've been knowed to follow seventy-two-hour trails, and they always come to the end. Of course there wasn't no danger of gettin' tore to pieces; bloodhounds are no more vicious than week old calves. But they do find their man.

Charley felt the three grouse in his pocket, and knowed that each of 'em was good for a fifty-dollar fine or sixty days in jail. Charley Hoe Handle didn't have no hundred and fifty dollars, or even a dollar and fifty cents. Still—there was a lot of things he'd rather do than spend a hundred and eighty days in jail.

Keepin' the tree between hisself and Horse Jenkins, he cat-footed to another tree and got behind that. Goin' from tree to tree—and a Injun what don't want to make no noise don't make none—he put hisself out of Horse's sight and started to run. Runnin' wasn't goin' to do him no good and he knowed it. The dog, and Horse Jenkins, could run as far and as fast as he could. What Charley aimed to do was gain some time and think things out.

He streaked through the woods to a little stream that wound among the ever-

greens, stepped in, and waded a hundred yards up. Then he got out on the same side he had gone in, ran another hundred yards up the bank, and crossed the stream again. For a minute he thought of droppin' his partridges in the water, leavin' them float away, and lettin' Horse ketch him. Nope. He had worked for those birds. Besides, didn't it say in all the books that the noble red man never killed nothin' he didn't use? Then, if he throwed them birds away, it would be admittin' Horse had scared him into it.

Charley streaked across an old burned-out place, went into the woods on the other side, climbed the ridge, and hitched hisself up on a big flat rock. He laid down, and from that high place he could look clean across the burn-over. Maybe that hound wasn't so good and would lose the trail in the water. Twenty minutes later Charley cussed a little. The hound was good enough. He and Horse was comin' across the burn.

Charley slid off the rock and laid behind it, while he wrinkled up his forehead and thought. He was supposed to know every twig on every tree in Stick County. He knowed where the deer runs was, how to catch coyotes—come to think of it, he was supposed to know just about everything.

Well, if he knowed that much . . .

FORTY-FIVE minutes later, with his hound still on the leash, Horse Jenkins come to the big sycamore what stood beside a beaver meadow. The hound had been runnin' with his head up for the last thousand feet; he had body scent again. Horse grinned, and thought of all the juicy steaks the hound was goin' to eat from now on. The hound reared against the sycamore and, for the first time since he'd started the trail, he bayed.

Horse Jenkins says, "All right, Charley. Come on down—"

He peered into the tree, and rubbed his eyes. Almost on the top branch was a big he coon, and Charley Hoe Handle's moccasins was tied to its hind legs. Horse swore, soft at first and then so loud that, if cuss words really burned, that big he coon would of dropped down skinned, roasted, and ready to eat. Horse tried to make the hound take the trail leadin' away from the tree, but all the dog would do was rear and bay that big he coon. For a minute Horse eyed the hound, and he was thinkin' about givin' it a swift kick in the ribs. But—it wasn't his fault. He went by smell, and Charley Hoe Handle's smell would sure be on his moccasins.

"Come on," Horse says to the hound. "He's give us the slip. Next time . . . "

Inside the hollow tree, his eyes glued to a knot hole, Charley Hoe Handle watched them go. He grinned. Maybe he didn't know *everything* about Stick County, but after a man had lost a certain amount of coons in this sycamore he was bound to climb it, and when he did he found that there was a two-foot-wide hollow leadin' in from the top of the first crotch. It was a good place for coons to den; there was usually one inside the tree.

Charley looked at his scratched and bit-up hands, and at the big he coon that wouldn't come down as long as there was a man in the tree. If coon pelts were only prime . . .

Charley Hoe Handle made a face, and started climbin' towards the big he coon for another fight. He couldn't go home without moccasins.

HE WHO RIDES THE TIGER

ILLUSTRATED BY
L. STERNE STEVENS

By JAMES NORMAN

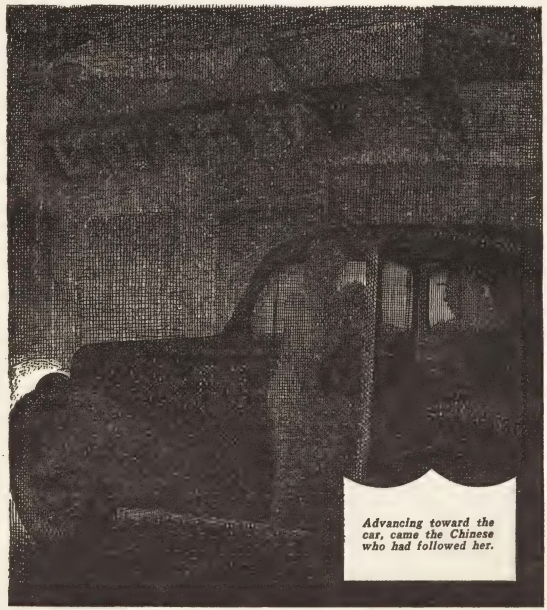
THE STORY THUS FAR:

DAVID ARMOUR, a noted Orientalist, wakes to find himself lying, weak and delirious, on a *k'ang* in Feng Wang Mission in North China—in the care of DR. LARSON, Swedish missionary, and GIMIENDO HERNANDEZ QUINTO, a huge inscrutable Mexican. They tell Armour he was brought to the mission two months before by Chinese partisan troops who had found him wandering aimlessly nearby.

Armour is unable to remember any event since a certain luncheon at the Wagon-Lits Hotel in Peiping back in 1940, six years before. And he is haunted by the fear that he may have collaborated with the Nips.

In Shanghai, Armour's wife, ADRIAN, forced to leave China during the war years, has returned to search for him. She has almost given up hope when MR. WU, a Chinese journalist, calls on her at the *News*, where she has taken a job. The old man tells her of a guerrilla leader called CHIAO, who harassed the Japs during the Occupation. Chiao, Wu says, was actually Armour. BYRNES, editor of the *News*, promises to help Adrian track down Wu's story.

At the mission, Quinto tells Armour that Adrian is in Shanghai, and urges him to remain in China to search for the fabulously precious Bronzes of T'ang, lost during the war. He believes they can be used to smooth the bargaining between the Northern Government and the Nationalists. Armour, now strong enough to travel, leaves for



Advancing toward the car, came the Chinese who had followed her.

Shanghai. On the train, he meets MONSIEUR CHEN, a plump, French-speaking Chinese who says he is an exporter and offers the American a commission as his agent in New York. He warns Armour that due to the confused political situation, Shanghai may be dangerous for him—and advises him to leave China at once.

In Shanghai, David and Adrian are reunited at last. She begs him to return to the States as soon as they can book passage, but Armour cannot rest until he picks up the threads of his six lost years. Other forces are at work to influence his decision. Monsieur Chen has set one of his watchdogs—a Chinese oddly attired in golf clothes—on his trail; Mr. Wu, the journalist, turns up wherever he goes; and Quinto sends word for Armour to come to the Cathay Bar. Leaving a message at the hotel for Adrian to join them, Armour meets the Mexican—and Mr. Wu. They discuss the Bronzes. Armour is doubtful of their existence—but Quinto shows him the book of Emperor Ch'ien Lung's treasures, where they are listed, and claims to have traced them to Nanking. . . . An extraordinarily beautiful Eurasian girl enters the bar. Incredibly, hers is the face Armour had seen in his half-mad, delirious dreams at Feng Wang Mission! But her name, ETOILE, stirs no memories in his confused brain. He begins to worry at Adrian's tardiness. . . .

PART III

THE few rickshaw men working the side streets branching east of Nanking Road darted from the dusk, offering their vehicles to Adrian. She turned them down, preferring to walk, to take time and think before she brought David the good news. She had been fortunate enough to get flight reservations from China.

"With luck, we might squeeze you in on the new CNAC flight to Manila day after tomorrow," Marcuson, the agent, had explained.

It was not what she had hoped for, but it was something. They would fly to Hong Kong, then to the Philippines. Although nothing had been promised beyond Manila she was satisfied. It was the idea of getting out of China that obsessed her.

She had left the air-agent's offices feeling a glow and happiness and it was only after she had begun walking toward Soochow Creek that anxiety crept upon her. She grew troubled wondering how strongly David felt about remaining in China, pressed by the mad desire to piece together lost years which had escaped his memory, years that were irretrievably submerged in the flood of China's history, years lost in the depths of a nation that cultivated oblivion for all but a few. Although she was afraid of what he might think, her fear of China was greater; not fear of the physical contours of the country or the ways of its people, but a deep and unpacifiable dread which she had never before experienced so intensely. There was a horror within her of what those six lost years of David's might contain and of what he might had done in that time.

The corroding fear grew into a fixation, flowering intense and unreasonable, turning itself and herself, and wanting to turn David, too, against China. She did not want him to find out what had happened since that day in Peiping. And the very logic of it became warped in a matter of moments. She began to dread, not just the past, but the seeking of it, and what unknown dangers searching might arouse. David was not the man to cope with unexpected danger and violence. He had never been forced to seek or expect it. His entire life had been trained toward other ends. Now, as she walked in the twilight, she whispered, "I can't stay . . . I won't stay . . ."

A quick warmth touched her cheeks and she knew that she was crying.

She stopped before a melon shop while drying her eyes and cheeks. A stoic-faced Chinese paused in his work of injecting water into his melons with a hypodermic needle to increase their weight and price, looked at her incuriously and returned to his task. When she shut her purse and turned to go she suddenly caught sight of a half familiar figure. Uncertain, she stopped and stared, her glance framing the same Chinese David had been curious about. The brown and white sport shoes, the sweater and that unpupiled romanesque stare which had been upon her and was now averted, identified him beyond doubt.

She turned swiftly and hurried down the street, all the while telling herself that it was sheer coincidence seeing the man both at the hotel and upon the street here. She looked back and saw him following. In this district, cut off from the stream of trade that drew twilight crowds to Nanking and Peking Roads, the approaching night muted and dispersed the nervous agitation of the Chinese day. Here men moved against the dusk, hur-

rying. Tradesmen were closing the wood and steel shutters on their shop fronts.

As she turned the next corner, she saw that the man had come closer. Panic welled up within her and she began running, her entire mind and body seizing upon a light in an open shop up the street as an hysteric objective, a haven and refuge.

She burst into the shop and stood there breathless and trembling, bathed in the amber light shed by the shop's single electric bulb. All at once there were people, scores of them, it seemed to her. She wanted to laugh with relief.

A stoic-faced Chinese paused in his work of injecting water into his melons to look at her incuriously.

CHAPTER X

THE PORCELAIN RABBIT

THE shopkeeper came forward to meet her, touching his hands together politely, evidently sensing her panic, yet not showing that he read it. His ridgeless face with its sparse soft mustache and narrow slits of eyes, and his considered indifference toward her lessening terror marked him as a Northerner or a Turkestan.

"The shop is inferior," his words of Chinese courtesy moved like the lulling tinkle of bells.

She tried to quiet the beating of her heart. Glancing through the doorway, she could now see nothing upon the street. Feeling safe for the moment, she smiled at the shopkeeper and his four salesmen who stood apart as though ranged according to the importance of their duties. They were undoubtedly related to the owner, she thought.

"Have you a telephone?" she asked. After saying it, she realized how futile the request was; so few small shops ever bothered with telephones.

"*Tien-hua,* telephone—" The shopkeeper's face abruptly animated, unable to hide the expression of eager pride. He motioned her to follow him to the rear of the shop. She noticed, for the first time, that it was an antiquarian's shop.

The telephone, too, was an antique. It was fastened to the wall next to the household shrine. The shopkeeper kowtowed to the phone and turning to Adrian, said, "This modern shop, will remember, please."

She was still too nervous and tense to be amused by the man's obvious pride.

"The New Astor," she told the operator, giving the number in English and her faulty Chinese. The operator returned two wrong numbers and finally asked once more for the Astor number. Adrian repeated it with an air of angry resignation. Long ago, she remembered, David had explained why nothing was ever achieved immediately in China. Its cause was not inefficiency, because the Chinese could be vehemently efficient, but rather the ancient doctrine called—*the logic of imperfection.* The people believed that

Heaven does not tolerate anything perfect; one must only strive to achieve it. If a household contained a complete set of the Chinese almanac covering a full cycle of sixty years with no volume missing, or an entire set of ancient coins with no lacuna, then the house would be destroyed by the jealousy of Heaven. A perfect garden must have an imperfect tree; a perfect plan of action must have one imperfection; there must always be one wrong number in a phone circuit.

At last, the hotel desk answered.

"Room 608," she said. "Mr. Armour."

"Is not in," came the metallic reply.

"Please try. This is Mrs. Armour."

There was a pause, then the voice of the hotel clerk: "Mr. Armour leave note for Missy. She meet him at Cathay by supper." A click, then Chinese voices at the telephone exchange filled the wire.

She saw the shopkeeper staring at her. He and the clan behind him remained polite, obsequious and undisturbed. "Is there another entrance to your shop? Another way out?" she asked.

"Can only afford one entrance. Poor shop."

"Oh."

She returned to the street door. In the black pit of the street, beyond the insecure edge of where the light cast from the shop only scooped a narrow oblong from the night, she could see nothing and no one until she had stepped cautiously into the street. A dozen yards to the right she saw the man—those golf shoes. She shrank back, body taut with new panic.

What to do? Try to reach David at the Cathay; but where in that vast complex hive? Mr. Byrnes!

She returned to the phone, trailed again by the shopkeeper and his constantly kowtowing aides who seemed more amused than annoyed by the curious activities of the foreign lady. Her call to the *News* brought disappointment again because only one attendant, a Chinese, was on duty. In desperation, she begged him to locate Mr. Byrnes or some other member of the foreign staff and to have them call this shop.

Turning again to the shopkeeper, she warned herself to be calm, to show no fear. Small merchants like the shopkeeper were shy of violence and any of its complications. Were his fears to become too greatly aroused, he might have her leave the shop and bar it for the night. It occurred to her to purchase something, spending out time in bargaining until Byrnes called back. She went to a glass counter where a number of small objects were displayed—ceramics, bronzes and signature stones.

"May I see it?" She pointed at a small bronze turtle, the kind frequently found in tomb excavations.

THE shopkeeper and his four salesmen immediately went into action, assuming their respective roles and functions. The shopkeeper stood by, prepared to guide the delicate negotiations by suggestion and glance. The Number One salesman, a fat middle-aged man, waited to hand Adrian the objects which might interest her; the Number Two, held a square of silk to dust the pieces with; Number Three, stood to one side holding a piece of wrapping paper in anticipation; and Number Four, a callow lad, remained to one side, prepared to witness officially any important transaction which might occur. The Number One salesman brought forth a silk padded tray and several purple satin boxes from behind the counter, spreading out his display, the less valuable pieces skillfully arranged so that Adrian would view them first.

As she examined the turtle, she glanced toward the street. Its emptiness chilled her. If someone would only come along it to break the suspense of emptiness. She placed the turtle back in its box. While on field expeditions with David, she had seen hundreds like it, or almost like it.

"It is very new," she said. "It is not a good piece."

"Ah, but very old," the shopkeeper protested politely. "Is T'ang grave piece."

She shook her head. "No T'ang," she said. "It is too stiff. The T'ang animals and reptiles were always alive. Anyway, the patina is new." She picked up the turtle again and scratched it. "See, the patina has not eaten into the metal like good patina. This was done with acids. It is made to look ancient. It is a poor forgery, don't you think?"

The shopkeeper's lips parted slightly, the only indication of his surprise and pleasure that this foreign woman should

know pieces. He clapped his hands softly and a young girl with braided pigtails came from a curtained doorway at the shop's rear. She brought two bowls of green tea and set them upon the counter. Adrian smiled at her pleasantly.

"You gather pieces?" the shopkeeper asked Adrian when the formality of the first sip of tea had been completed.

"My husband does," she answered. "I have learned a little from him."

"Have other very fine pieces, very authentic, but are not turtles," the dealer said, nodding toward his Number One salesman. The fat one brought forth a box and displayed its treasure, a jade tea bowl, pale green splashed with emerald. "Ch'ing workmanship," the shopkeeper said.

Adrian noticed that he glanced furtively toward the street and hesitated as though fearful of displaying this bowl too long.

"It's lovely."

"Is poor effort of Peiping artist. But very suitable for drinking Before-the-Rain tea."

"What is its value?"

The dealer now reflected upon this and Adrian was also aware that even his squad of salesmen had become still and reflective as though respecting the important calculations their leader must devise. The shopkeeper would decide on a price which subtly blended the quality of the bowl with the obvious wealth of the lady, also carefully accounting for her apparent knowledge of fine things and the curious fear which had brought her into his shop. All these would be delicately fused into the present value of the jade bowl.

"I should think nine hundred—"

Adian looked startled. "Chinese?"

"No. Nine hundred American."

"I could not pay more than four hundred," she countered, and at the same time glancing toward the telephone, her entire senses and thoughts canted toward it, waiting for it to ring.

"Inflation is so large now," the dealer apologized for his price.

"Really, the bowl is too good for my needs."

The shopkeeper smiled sadly and politely. The ritual and formula of China's age-old commerce were to be followed and he repeated the phrases his father, his grandfather and their fathers had used: "Is my first sale today," he murmured, and he would say it if he had already sold a thousand things since dawn. "It is good omen to make first sale with first customer. Will make small sacrifice. Perhaps eight hundred fifty dollars, American."

"Unfortunately, I'm not rich," Adrian answered. How often, she thought, had she been with David when he had gone through this ritual with the same understanding patience of the Chinese. She knew the shopkeeper did not expect her and would not want her to purchase the bowl today. He wanted to discuss it, only, to relish the interchange of thought, to enjoy the intricacies of maneuver. Tomorrow or the next day would be the day for buying. But how little he understood of what might prevent her from ever returning to this shop. The telephone—why didn't it ring?

SHE forced herself to go on with the set formulas of bargain and purchase. She put the jade bowl down with an air of disinterest, exactly as the dealer expected her to, and let her glance run over other objects displayed. Her attention fastened upon a small porcelain figurine, a rabbit. It was like the amulet David had given her a few hours before.

"This *t'u-erh?*" she said.

"Is worthless," the dealer said. "Lady wish see some in jade?"

She took the amulet David had given her from her purse and compared the two. They seemed identical, as identical as two things can be in China where handicraft is art, and form is a man's signature. Both porcelain rabbits gazed stiffly and blissfully at an invisible moon. "Do you have more?" she asked.

The shopkeeper seemed surprised that she, too, had an amulet. "You have been to Soochow?" he asked.

"Soochow?"

"Soochow is place of these, the porcelain rabbit. I think many Soochow people have them."

"There's writing on the bottom," she said. "Is it the maker, or the shop where they are sold?"

The dealer knitted his brows studying the characters upon the two amulets, then

shook his head. "Is ancient *wen-li* familiar only to certain scholars; not like modern *kuo-yu* writing." He glanced at her shrewdly. "Can find meaning for you from scholar friend."

"Now?" Adrian asked.

His eyes flicked toward the jade tea bowl for a second. He, rather than his Number One salesman began packing the bowl, setting it in its box with the gentleness of a man who specializes in handling rare flower petals. "Not immediate," he murmured. "Perhaps if you return, information here."

The sound of a motor car came from outside. Both Adrian and the dealer looked out. An American limousine with a large flag painted on its side to indicate the owner was a foreigner, pulled up at the far curb. She could not make out the nationality of the flag.

"Tomorrow at this time," the dealer suggested.

She nodded slowly, handing him the amulets. Her attention reached toward the automobile. A dim light from within the car illuminated the figures of a man and woman, not in detail, but diffused. Then she saw the chauffeur get out and go up the street, swallowed by the night. She turned toward the shopkeeper quickly. "Can I telephone you to set a time?"

"Sorry very much," the man apologized. "No call, please. Telephone only work one way for calling out. Bell always sleeping."

The words penetrated her conscious mind slowly and gathered with sudden impact. *No bell!* "But I've been waiting here for it to—" She realized her voice had scaled to a shout. "Oh, what a fool," she cried, panic seizing her once more.

Across the street she saw the chauffeur returning to the limousine, walking slowly into and against the glare of the car's headlights. Then, as if in that dream-like spectacle, the image of a man's deliberate and measured walk against a funnel of light, she had found an answering way out of her panic, she ran from the shop and across the street to the limousine, wrenching the car's door open.

"Please, can I ride with you? Someone is following me." She poured out her breathless plea to the car's occupants.

Hands reached and helped her inside. A voice murmured, *"Certainement."*

IN THE half-dark, she found herself seated beside a woman whose perfume was extremely noticeable. She seemed to be a blonde, a European woman, and a handsome one. The woman's escort was a plump Chinese man who wore the traditional gown and a light-colored Homburg hat.

"I'm sorry," Adrian explained when she had caught her breath, "I thought you might be Americans. I needed help. Can you drop me off at the Cathay?"

The woman stared at her without expression.

"Someone was following me," Adrian tried to clarify it. She turned to point out where the man with the golf shoes had been and, at once, the words jelled in her throat, her voice solidified with terror and shock. Advancing toward the car, as though feeling his way along the edge of the headlight beam, came the Chinese who had followed her. He opened the front door of the car, slipped in beside the chauffeur without so much as looking at her. She tried to scream but the sound choked within her.

The limousine stirred, creeping gently up the street. A voice with fluid French intonations came to her as though from a distance. *"Alors,* it is necessary to be calm, Madame Armour."

She turned, staring transfixed at the speaker, the Chinese man who seemed small and fat and utterly jovial.

The man went on: "I am Monsieur Chen. We are intimate friends, your husband and I. The excellent lady here is Mademoiselle Casadou, a beautiful name, *n'est-ce pas?* She is Greek. Everything assembles in Shanghai; the Japanese, the Lend-Lease, the Greeks. But no alarm now. We will have a comfortable visit because I have so hoped to meet you."

Sitting rigidly on the edge of the car seat, emotions still numbed by the suddenness of what had occurred and her mind reeling against the order of events, Adrian found herself unable to speak. She noticed the incredible black cat on Monsieur Chen's lap. Its eyes, glowing luminously in the darkness, were brutal and mesmeric.

"Alors, I forget to introduce Albertine," said M. Chen. "Now remember, Albertine, the Armours do not like to be

stared at. Keep this carefully in mind. The Madame is uncomfortable, perhaps if you were to purr politely—"

The huge limousine had rounded back to Tientsin Road, gliding smoothly northward now in the direction of the Public Park and the fashionable residential district bordering Bubbling Well Road.

"Where are you taking me?" Adrian demanded, her voice still nervous and uneven.

"To the Cathay, *naturellement,* as you request."

"This isn't the direction."

Monsieur Chen chuckled animatedly. "You new Americans are so restlessly bent," he said, at the same time caressing the cat with one hand and cheerfully squeezing Mademoiselle Casadou's pale hand with his other. *"Elle n'a pas l'aire philosophique comme nous,"* he whispered loudly to the Greek girl.

The girl smiled wanly, neither responding nor looking at him. Although Adrian had never seen her before, she had seen hundreds of her kind in Shanghai. They were the women with the thin smiles, the set faces; the women found in the great bars and small hotels of Shanghai. Their expressions were fixed and mechanical, pale smiles yellowed in the light of a martini, or white exhaustion when they returned to their hotels at daybreak to sleep out their despair. These were the refugees who had neither nation nor hope. They gambled what was left of their youth against time and in a game always menaced by the uncertainty of life in the Orient. Adrian felt a quick sympathy for her.

"Your husband is preparing to leave for America, Madame Armour?" said Mr. Chen. It was more a statement than a question.

"We're leaving for the States," she replied challengingly.

"Ah, bien, tout va bien. But there must be no delay. I wish to help you, Albertine and I."

His answer startled her for it was laced with polite, withheld insistence. And it had come so unexpectedly. She had met Mr. Wu who had wanted David to remain in China, and she had heard of Gimiendo Quinto who had talked David into wanting to stay. She tried to make out the features of this plump, mundane creature within the changing lights flickering in the car. The moments of febrile highlights cast patterns upon his cheerful, gelatinous face, made his features appear more mobile and expressive than men's features tend to be in China.

"I can help with transportation," Chen offered.

"You needn't. We've arranged to go."

"I have offered my personal plane to your husband. Absolutely modern. The latest conveniences. To Hong Kong or Manila. You can leave tomorrow. Kiangwan Airport *n'est-ce pas?"*

"What did my husband say?" she asked carefully.

Monsieur Chen coughed, embarrassed. "Ah, *quelle bêtise.* I forgot to suggest it. I did not want to suggest it until I was certain the runways were in repair. The latest communication, from this afternoon. They will be repaired in the morning."

SPRAWLING against the night like gigantic and enigmatic cuneiforms, the vivid lights and neon writing along Bubbling Well Road came into view. Their reflected glow, falling into the car, seemed to ease the tension within Adrian. Now that she could see M. Chen's round, effusive face more clearly, he seemed less mad than he had sounded in the darkness.

Chen leaned across the Greek girl's knees, totally ignoring the girl, his fat well-manicured hand touching Adrian's arm gravely. He said, "But with no delay. The life of your husband is in profound danger. I have this on the best information. Absolutely indisputable."

"Why?"

The query seemed to surprise the Chinese. "Why—" he said, then shook his head preposterously. *"Alors,* the reason is unimportant. Man is always menaced; *nous sommes trompés par l'apparence du bien."* He lowered his voice conspiratorially, nodded toward the front seat. "You see the *torpedo* there who wears the golf shoes, and the other who wears the cap. *Voilà,* their sole duty in life is to protect you, Madame, and your husband. An admirable destiny, I tell you."

The car shouldered in toward the curbing before the Park Hotel and stopped. While the doorman came to meet them,

M. Chen suddenly and completely ignored Adrian, and gave his entire attention to the Greek girl. "Tonight, *plus tard,*" he whispered affably. "What perfume, delicious." He kissed her hand as she left the car.

Adrian stared toward the sharp blue light falling through the hotel doorway. The desperate desire to escape from the car filled her with excitement until she noticed Chen's bodyguard in the front seat. He had turned to watch her, staring with that unpupiled blankness which so unnerved her.

Mademoiselle Casadou gone, M. Chen leaned back, sighing pleasantly as the limousine moved forward again. *"Bien,* the Cathay now," he murmured. Then with a slyness, "But perhaps the Madame is interested in the night life of Shanghai. *Le Jockey Bar,* perhaps?"

"The Cathay," Adrian replied bluntly, though scarcely believing that he would bring her there. She avoided looking at him and his grotesque cat. She stared, instead, directly ahead, looking past the prominent ears of the Chinese chauffeur and the watchdog next to him, gazing only into the white cone of light upon the road. At times the light became something definite and solid. One could almost crawl through its white glaring funnel to where the dust backed the light up, boiling it.

Her glance returned to M. Chen's face and she tried to make out whatever intent might lay behind his impeccable, strangely affable and worldly airs. His round heavy lips, the pouting cheeks and thin angular eyes told her nothing. Long ago she had given up trying to read the character behind the stoical fixed expressions of the Chinese she met through David. Their faces showed character and humors; but the outward signs, the shape of eye, the look, the turn of lip, did not translate into forms that held meaning for a Westerner. Here all inner feeling, emotion and desire was modified by a set culture and tradition which required rigidly formalized gestures and expressions toward the world while the inner nature remained secret and hidden. She was afraid M. Chen's smooth, glossy effusiveness was just that—a camouflage hiding Chen.

"The Madame is quiet," Chen chuckled. "Is it that she is also afraid?"

She did not reply.

"Alors, your husband has told you of his adventures *chez les partisans?"*

"Some," she answered.

"Then you are not afraid for him?"

She stared at him uneasily. "Why should I be?"

"It is one of those things."

"What things?"

Monsieur Chen raised his hand, fingers fluttering as though to illustrate something that remained formless. "In Shanghai do not ask for definite things," he replied. "Everything of importance is only suggested. The world is a huge suggestion, I tell you. You Americans are always mistaken, Madame. The zeal, you understand? Here in Shanghai a man can be arrested on suspicion of a crime. When the arrest is made, then police investigate to find if there was any crime. In your country you foolishly wait until the crime has been committed. It is incredible. Such childish laws; such zeal for the definite." He laughed softly. "It is enough that I suggest, *n'est-ce pas?"*

"I don't think so," Adrian replied furiously. "Who told you he was in danger—you?"

"I have little birds," Chen smiled. "They tell me. And Albertine eats the birds, the smallest ones. Such digestion, feathers and all."

CHAPTER XI

THE SHADOW OF VIOLENCE

SOMEWHERE, someone's laughter wore off with frayed fretfulness. A Chinese orchestra played polite, listless tango melodies which lost themselves in the ultramodern cafe-restaurant housed under the black pyramid roof of Sassoon House. Absently, Armour tried to trace the laugh but lost it in the rich complexity of sounds, strange accents and faces around him.

Sitting alone at a table near the glassed-in wall, which in daytime looked down upon the Bund and the Yangtse, he forced himself to be at ease, at least to look at ease. Still, his nervousness over Adrian's delay grew with each passing minute. He had called the hotel and dis-

covered that she had received his message. Mr. Wu, who had agreed to remain in the bar downstairs to intercept her if she went there, had reported nothing as yet. It was already nine o'clock.

His attention wandered fitfully toward the doorway, then returned to the glass wall at his elbow. The night outside was beginning to yellow with mist that rubbed silently against the windows. In clear weather one had a magnificent vista of the vehicle-crowded Bund, the Woosung with its crawling cargo ships and butterfly junks and, in the distance, the blue-gray line of the far shore. But now, the glass had become a mirror backed by the night. As he stared at it his own face stared back, startling him at first, then interesting him. Whose face was it? He wondered what that face in the glass had seen, where it had been, whom it had smiled or grimaced at during the past few years. The realization that he was making no progress in the task of peeling back his lost years, of catching a glimpse of their core, depressed him.

He looked toward the people in the restaurant. At a nearby table he recognized a group from the American Consulate. At another table an American Naval officer from the *Los Angeles,* at anchor on the Shanghai waterfront, and a Chinese pilot from the Government air force, noisily performed a maneuver, their outstretched elbows serving for wings and cocktails for landing fields. He wished any one of these unfamiliar people would come to him, saying, "Didn't I see you last year at—" But no one approached him to say they had actually seen him. It was as if his last six years had been lived in a vacuum, or that he had died and no one had bothered to cut a gravestone to mark his spot.

His glance swerved toward the doorway again and he stiffened slightly, pulse beating with rapid excitement. The Eurasian girl, Etoile, had come in. Still surrounded by men in uniform, Chinese and foreign; always seeming to ward them off, yet attract them with her air of elusive and demure charm, she went to a table at the far side of the restaurant. For a second he was tempted to go to her table, asking her if she recognized him. The urge faded when he saw Monsieur Chen appear at the doorway, cat upon his shoulder, fine silk gown shimmering. Then his lips parted in amazement. Adrian was with the Chinese.

Adrian and M. Chen saw him and came toward his table.

She kissed him as he rose. "Dave," she murmured. "I was afraid I'd miss you. I was—"

As he touched her body, he sensed that she was trembling.

"Ah, Monsieur Armour," M. Chen greeted him enthusiastically, all the while beaming at Adrian. "She is completely charming, *délicieuse vraiment.*" Then in a softer, roguish voice, "But she leaves Shanghai soon. A pity."

Armour and Adrian sat down.

"Where've you been, Ade?" he asked.

She smiled, bewildered. "Mr. Chen—" Then she explained what had happened, her words coming forth in a sudden flood, disconnected, breathless, a bit frightened and uncertain.

Listening to her unfinished account, he looked up at M. Chen who stood beside the table. His own angry gaze was met by Chen's expression of tender sympathy. He heard Adrian saying, "Dave, we can go, day after tomorrow. I've arranged it."

"You must take Madame Armour's advice," Chen put in. "But quickly. I mentioned the graveness of your position in Shanghai to her. You are a marked man, I tell you. Marked. Absolute . . ."

Monsieur Chen's voice trailed off inconclusively. He was no longer looking at Armour. Instead, he stared across the restaurant toward the Eurasian girl's table and his expression contained the same somewhat foolish qualities which Armour had seen in Mr. Wu when the old man had first looked at the girl named Etoile.

"Know her?" Armour asked.

M. CHEN shook his head slowly. *"Mais non,* but she is magnificent, is she not? I will know her. Albertine must meet her. It is incredible, two such creatures in Shanghai at once—Albertine and she." Abruptly, he changed the conversation, saying, "But it is not the thing now. Your future is of the first importance now, Monsieur. I have offered my *avion* if you leave tomorrow. And the commission in New York. Very lucrative, I tell you."

Armour's glance flicked toward the cat riding on M. Chen's shoulder. The animal eyed him wickedly. He looked at M. Chen again, speaking bluntly.

"It appears to me you're quite anxious for me to leave China, particularly for a man I've never met. Could it be that you're interested in a few T'ang Bronzes and you're worried because I might have similar interests?"

"Bronzes?" M. Chen said suddenly, then laughed with a hint of uncontrol. "Ha, Bronzes. I do not collect T'ang Bronzes. You can have the T'angs, I will take the Hans."

"I embarrass you, don't I?"

"Pas du tout."

Armour smiled faintly. "You collect curious things," he told Chen. "Tithes from opium, favors from the *thought police*. Isn't it possible that something as rare and valuable as the treasures from an emperor's grave should appeal to you? Perhaps enough to want me removed from China, eh?"

M. Chen's eyes no longer wandered across the restaurant to the other table. Now, as if the music had stopped in midnote and a screen had been placed around their table, Armour and the Chinese stared at each other silently. Chen's face, his features and his entire body became serenely and blandly meditative.

M. Chen laughed with a hint of uncontrol. "Ha, Bronzes. I do not collect T'ang Bronzes."

The Chinese said, "*Ce soir,* tonight Madame Armour was alone in the streets of Shanghai. I was fortunate enough to be of service to her, to escort her in my limousine. *Mais alors,* if she remains in Shanghai there may be other evenings when I cannot be present to help her."

Armour frowned for a second, translating the under-meaning of M. Chen's words. The man was no longer Monsieur Chen, French citizen, suave, jovial man of the world. Here at this moment he had subtly, though not wholly, reverted to the ways and manners of Old China. It was incongruous and fantastic because the change was not complete.

Adrian suddenly spoke: "But Dave, he didn't . . . It was his man who—"

He pressed his hand over hers warmly. "You don't follow, Adrian," he said quietly. "Mr. Chen is politely telling us, without putting it in exact words, that he kidnapped you this evening."

"But he brought me here," she said, bewildered.

M. Chen smiled. "Your husband is very understanding."

Armour nodded. It was impossible for him to tell Adrian, to make her understand the full meaning of Chen's words and actions. He had kidnapped her, yet had brought her back in accordance with the ancient Chinese belief that the threat of something is more potent and forceful than the execution of the threat. How could he explain that Chen's act drew its power not only from the fact that its violence remained suspended and abeyant, yet ever present, immobile, yet pregnant with motion, but also from the fact that the victim must understand all this? It was a strategy which only Chinese could use against Chinese, or that a Chinese like M. Chen saw fit to apply against one who understood China's ways; it was a maneuver which contained a certain element of mutual respect, and of endless patience.

He kept his eyes on Chen's face, contemplating the now sober, bland-faced Chinese, and at the same time held in his own futile fury. He felt, rather than heard the sound of dancing in the restaurant, the murmur of voices, the even hum of life moving in a continuous pattern. The normality of everything struck him as odd and monstrous. The only abnormal thing was this table by the window. Somehow, he wanted to laugh aloud. He had never imagined in all his life that his own well-being, or Adrian's, would be threatened directly and personally by another man. He had always pictured death or injury as something which took place on a white-sheeted bed, or at worst, on a pavement as a result of a motor accident. There was a frightening irony in having the prospects of violence presented to you across a white starched tablecloth.

WHEN he spoke again to Chen, his voice was flat and distant. He said, "We'll be more watchful."

"You take my commission?"

"I'm considering it," he replied carefully.

M. Chen bowed, his round face growing animated and enthusiastic once more. "Tomorrow," he said, "Albertine will visit you. She is fascinated by you, Monsieur Armour." Then, after glancing toward the Eurasian girl's table: "Before you depart I must bring you a present. I have porcelain, I tell you, magnificent. A gift."

Armour watched the man saunter across the restaurant toward the Eurasian girl's table. He was undecided which was the strangest of the two—Chen or his cat. He was somehow fascinated by that black powerful creature which was so like Chen, yet so unlike him. Each time he saw the cat it filled him with an odd presentiment, a feeling of latent violence being near. It was as if the delicate sensitivities of the cat were transplanted to his own mind, allowing him to capture currents vibrating in the air at a pitch beyond ordinary comprehension. It made him feel as if he were skirting dangerously close to an existence that was his and which he had forgotten. He had that feeling now and it ran through him strongly.

He turned his smile toward Adrian. "Want to stay here, darling, or eat somewhere else?"

"It doesn't matter. Here."

He called the waiter and ordered. During the dinner Monsieur Chen's shadow remained upon them. From time to time Armour watched the Eurasian girl's table where Chen had successfully maneuvered

himself into becoming part of her entourage. He began to wonder if Chen had not known her before. And Adrian, too, was uneasy. The strange encounter between M. Chen and David recalled all the dread she had over what David's past might have been. It had seemed as if David had been the weaker one in the encounter. His anger against Chen had risen, then unlike other men, he had let it dissipate as though he were afraid of it or uncertain of how to use it.

When their coffee came and they had lit their cigarettes she startled him, saying, "Does Soochow mean anything to you, Dave?"

"The city or the creek?"

"City."

He shook his head. "Should it, Ade?"

She smiled tiredly. "The rabbit amulet you gave me came from Soochow. I thought it might mean something."

He tried to picture the city, Soochow, which lay halfway between Nanking and Shanghai, in his memory. He had been through the city years before he had married Adrian, and now his only impressions of it were a lingering memory of confused canals and countless beautiful bridges.

"A few hours ago Soochow might have interested me a good deal more than it does now," he smiled. "I saw Quinto and your Mr. Wu downstairs. They wanted me to go to Nanking tomorrow and begin working my way back through the various towns between Nanking and here. Soochow could be one of them."

"But why, Dave? The Bronzes?"

"Yes. Quinto seemed certain the T'angs vanished between there and here. If I were to go into the country, he felt it might serve as a catalyst to force M. Chen or whoever else is interested, into exposing themselves. But now, I doubt if there are any T'angs such as Quinto envisioned. The descriptions he gave me of four missing Bronzes came from the Ch'ien Lung catalogue, and as far as I recall, never existed. They're just examples of the padding of catalogues scholars once seemed to get a good amount of sly satisfaction in doing."

A swift revealing change showed in Adrian's eyes and in the relieved softness of her features; it was like a flower coming out of the night and opening itself toward the sun. "David," she said happily. "Then you weren't . . . It means you weren't helping them hide those stolen things?"

"It seems to leave me where I was when I came to at the mission, as far as Quinto's idea goes that I had something to do with stolen Bronzes," he said dryly. "What worries me is that M. Chen hasn't let up. It's become a ludicrous joke, but for one thing. Perhaps Chen isn't even aware of Quinto's T'angs. Perhaps it's something else."

His glance went across the restaurant to where M. Chen sat. At this moment, Chen seemed aware of nothing but the Eurasian girl. He had already eliminated some of the bemedaled and uniformed opposition and was sitting beside her. Albertine, the cat, scrounged around among the wine glasses.

CHAPTER XII

PEIPING MADNESS

THE aura of security which he had built up during the latter part of dinner turned to a shredded thing the moment he and Adrian left the Cathay. At the street entrance he suddenly pulled Adrian back within the shelter of the doorway.

"Dogs of Fu," he murmured vexedly, pointing toward the street curb where Chen's watchdog, the Chinese with the golf shoes, quickly alerted himself upon seeing them.

They waited, scanning the street beyond for a taxi, not realizing that there were fewer taxis in Shanghai than ever before in its history. Yet, standing there in the half shadows, Armour began to realize how much the Concessions had changed since before the war. The old Western immunity was gone. Shanghai was now China, not a collection of concessions wrenched from an abject nation. All the secret and distilled turmoil, the hidden threats and latent dread, once held off from the foreign city by barbed wire and bayonet, had now seeped in.

"Your vehicle, Mr. Armour," a familiar voice came from behind them.

He turned and saw Mr. Wu grinning cheerfully. "My vehicle?"

"Excellent modern vehicle," Mr. Wu

bowed to Adrian. "Loan by intimate friend Mr. Quinto. I am assigned bodyguard. Is utter importance your husband remain alive a while. Maybe longer."

The old man's long gown flowed about him like the wrapping of a frail medieval aesthete as he stepped down to the walk and led them confidently past M. Chen's expressionless watchdog to a car parked at the curb. The official Siamese Legation flag hung limply from a chrome standard fastened to the car's bumper. A round-faced Siamese boy, the chauffeur, waited behind the wheel.

The package contained a flat, Japanese automatic pistol.

"Mr. Quinto play poker with legation friends tonight," Wu explained as they entered the car. "All night game as usual."

Armour smiled faintly. He found it difficult to be startled any longer by the Mexican's curious maneuvers and his even more fantastic connections in China. On reaching the New Astor, the old man followed them into the lobby where he gave Armour a small, heavy package wrapped in red paper.

"Friend of Mr. Quinto," he said. Then settling himself in one of the lobby easy-chairs and carefully folding his hands within his long sleeves, he gave Adrian a discreet look, saying, "Am ever-alert servant. Will remain here in night. If danger comes, please arouse me. This humble one possesses vigilance and stalwartness of Ambassador Su-Wu who single-handedly subdued Tartars."

"He's a little mad," Adrian said as they entered the elevator.

David laughed. "A kind of rare old Peiping madness," he agreed.

Mr. Wu's odd behavior and incredible activities had an effect upon them. They laughed and the laughter brought them closer together, cutting away the barrier which had formed between them in the day. The floor boy let them in and when they were alone at last Adrian put her arms around him, saying, "Oh, Dave, it's so good to be with you."

He kissed her. "It's good for me, too."

"What did Wu give us?"

"Present." He took the Emperor Ch'ien Lung catalogue from his pocket and the red wrapped package. "Should have returned the book to him," he said. "Alone it's not worth much, but with the other forty-one volumes it's worth a fortune."

Before he had completely unwrapped the package he recognized its contents—a flat, Japanese automatic pistol. It was loaded and, being unfamiliar with its mechanism, he had trouble removing the clip and chambered shell. The presence of the gun seemed to chill Adrian forcing all the warmth from her which she had held toward him.

"WE ARE going home, aren't we, David?" she said abruptly.

"Of course."

"Day after tomorrow, aren't we?" she persisted. "I made the arrangements for then."

He nodded slowly, then said, "I thought we might run up to Nanking tomorrow for the day, or to Soochow. The amulet came from there, didn't it?"

"I don't want to go, Dave. I don't want you to go either," she protested. There was an urgency in her voice, and that familiar thread of stubbornness. "I want to stay in Shanghai until we leave. Who knows what might happen out there if we go?"

"Nothing will happen."

"David—" She turned her back upon him and went to the darkened window. The dull, reflected light from the street below glowed against her cheek and he could almost trace the angular stubbornness in its line. He read the straight and indomitably rigid change in her body, the tension of limb and flesh silhouetted there in the faint light.

She was slipping away from him completely, he thought. When they had first come together today after that long void of six years, their first emotions had been clean and quick, the simple and direct joining of two people and their desires; but slowly, through the day and evening, a force had come between them and their love, separating Adrian and her own stubborn wish to flee from China immediately, from him and his own sick fixation to uncover the lost threads of his past.

He shut his eyes for a moment, trying wretchedly to understand. His obsession had weakened this evening out of fear for Adrian's safety and because he had grown less certain of Quinto's theory that he had had something to do with missing Bronze treasures. Adrian must have seen and felt it, yet her own stubbornness grew more adamant. He wondered bitterly if something, a change which he could not put his mind on, had occurred in her. He could hear her oppressed breathing now, and from somewhere beyond in the night the sobbing horn of a river boat. He opened his eyes again. She was still there beside the window; her familiar boyish body with its averted profile, the round sweep of her cheek, an elongated eyelash catching the glint of outside lights. Who was she? A woman who had been his wife, who would be his wife until the end of time? Did he dare place a handful of lost memories upon a scale, weighing them against the eternity of years each could share together?

He went to her, not really knowing why he moved in precisely this way at exactly this moment. He knew only that he was in a state of crisis which on the morrow he might no longer have an understanding of or ever be able to recreate again. She had turned at the sound of his steps and stared at him with an intense anxiety that said many things: it said, no one had replaced him in her heart. She again had that direct way of looking at him, a way so personally hers, with its attraction, strange and powerful. And now they were in each other's arms, she sobbing quietly and helplessly; he finding refuge from this unnamed dread which was causing him to lose her entirely; both unaware that they were using all their strength to hold each other in close embrace.

Adrian suddenly turned away: someone had rung. The spell which had woven its frantic threads about them subsided. The bell rang again. David felt the instant tautness that ran through Adrian as he withdrew his arms from about her and went to the telephone.

"Hello?"

A voice, pushing curiously broken bits of English over the wire, explained that the call came from the Siamese legation or consulate, it was not certain. Then the first voice gave way to Quinto's solid, humorous tones.

"*Hola,* Señor Armour."

"Yes, this is Armour."

"*Bueno.* I have the fortunate news. You are attentive, yes? I have just won an automobile. She is Siamese, but you do not mind. It is the same one you went to the hotel in this evening. Then it was not Quinto's, but four queens—"

Adrian had come to his side at the phone. Her body was tense, head turned, listening. The faint pleasant odor of her perfume reached him.

"It's Quinto," he said, smiling up at her reassuringly.

QUINTO'S voice: *"Entonces, compañero,* this car will take you riding tomorrow in the morning at ten. You will bring your woman, eh? While I am along there is no danger, *sabe?"*

He squeezed the phone in his hand, hesitating, tremendously aware of Adrian beside him. Then he spoke into the phone quickly. "I'm not going anywhere," he said.

There was a momentary silence, a hum across the wire, then: *"Hijo de la chingada!"* The explosive Mexican blasphemy was followed by a shorter silence followed by the biting inquiry: "It is a joke, eh?"

"No joke."

"Then you have found your memory someplace?"

"Not at all. I don't see the point in searching for T'ang Bronzes which don't exist."

Quinto's voice became impatient. "You forget, it was you, Señor, who talked of such bronzes in your fever."

"We're leaving China, nevertheless," Armour answered bluntly.

A longer pause, then a meditative sigh. "You do not have enough sleep, Señor. Tomorrow you will think more clearly, maybe. It is only important that you understand it is your memory you are spending. When you are an old man and perhaps begin counting up your years, you will notice some of them are missing. It will be a great confusion, eh? Tomorrow morning we will debate this." A pleasant, satisfied belch from Quinto's end of the line terminated the conversation.

"I was afraid that you wouldn't," Adrian said happily as he turned to her.

"Put him off?"

"Yes. But you did . . . Kiss me again, Dave."

He took her in his arms again; this time without the frenzied passion which had swayed him before, but with calmness. Her lips against his seemed mute, yet full of voice. Her body was soft and warm and infinitely yielding . . .

Sometime later as they lay in the darkened room, idly watching the pattern of Shanghai's night lights playing through the window and across the wall and ceiling, he began to laugh.

"Mr. Wu the Guardsman is still downstairs," he said.

Adrian squeezed his arm. "Shall we fire him now, or wait until tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow."

"What made you think of him?"

"I suddenly remembered who the ambassador named Su-Wu was." He began to laugh again.

"He didn't sit in lobbies, did he?"

"No. Su-Wu was the Chinese ambassador to the Tartar or Outer Mongolian Court about twenty centuries ago. He subdued the Tartars by sheer force of character, so the Chinese think. He's considered China's greatest diplomat. He was sent by the Emperor to pacify the Tartars but when he reached their Court they tossed him in jail. He never asked for mercy and endured nineteen years of torture in silence. As a result, the Tartar *kahn* was so impressed he finally broke down, let Su-Wu return to China and also promised never to violate the Chinese borders. Of course, the Tartars did invade later, but old Su is still looked upon as the man who held off the Tartars for a thousand years, the victim who subdued the aggressor."

CHAPTER XIII

SLEEPWALKERS OF SHANGHAI

MR. WU was no longer in the hotel lobby when they left the elevator and walked toward the breakfast room, but Quinto was. He approached them directly, as though his size were formality enough.

"You see, it is ten o'clock," he said. "I am prompt."

For once Armour found himself resenting the man's presence, and particularly the manner in which he appraised Adrian, looking at her with a semi-quizzical, aggrieved expression, brown thumbprint eyes flattening against her, molding about her as though physically taking an impression of her as a sculptor does in preparing a cast.

"So you are the convincing argument, eh Señora?" he blinked at her somewhat forbiddingly. Then to Armour: *"Ayi,* the woman always is a very convincing argument. *Feng ta sui feng, Fu-jen ta—"* He began the old proverb then translated, "When wind is strong, yield to the wind; when woman is strong, yield to woman."

Armour ignored the barb. "Adrian," he said, "this is Quinto. He helped me at the mission hospital. My wife, Mr. Quinto."

Adrian smiled with chilled politeness. It was as if an instant and distinct, an embodied antagonism had sprung up between her and the big colorful man. Quinto, on the other hand, remained enormously tolerant, a man accustomed to having women at odds with him. He paused, making himself a cigarette from loose shreds of tobacco he carried like change in his pockets, then set his smoky eyes upon her again.

"*Entonces,* you are very anxious to take the Señor to America, eh?" he asked as he hung the cigarette from his heavy lips.

"Very," Adrian replied.

"That is foolish. In my hands your husband is as safe as a small unimportant baby. Quinto is one who loves babies."

Armour interrupted with annoyance. "Well, we're going anyway."

Quinto made a gentle motion with his hand, a gesture pushing aside Armour's objection. His brown smudgy eyes flicked toward Adrian as though he were impossibly fascinated and challenged by her. He said, "Señora is a very stubborn woman, *muy burra* for one so beautiful. But I am thinking it is not all stubbornness in you. You are a frightened woman, yes? You are afraid of your husband and this is why you wish to go."

"Frightened?" Adrian laughed thinly.

"*Ayi,* you run away with the Señor, but you also run away from him. It is the eyes which tell me you are frightened by the mystery of what Señor Armour might have been or might have done when he was not with you for six years. You are afraid of this thing."

Adrian stared at the man, disturbed and made uneasy by his disquieting logic. She was afraid of what David might have done and had lost the remembrance of, but she was more terrified by the possibility that his lost years might reach forth, involving him in dangers he would be unfitted to cope with. Quinto's very presence here hinted of such trouble and now she feared Quinto.

"I'm afraid you're mistaken," Armour cut in abruptly, wanting to sheer off the conversation which so upset Adrian.

Quinto regarded him whimsically.

"My wife has been through a good deal of nervous strain," Armour replied. "She's tired. She needs rest and change, and so do I. We may return to China later to pick up the threads."

Quinto made a slight, helpless grimace. "But what is one week, more or less?" he protested. "It is important not only to find the T'angs but—"

"They don't exist. I told you that."

"*Ayi, puede ser que si,* but nothing exists until it is discovered. Still, I will guarantee that the Emperor Ch'ien Lung's tomb was robbed. Do you not wish to know what was robbed?"

"Not under present circumstances."

"But it is important to uncover your history, *hombre.*" The Mexican lit his cigarette and tasted the smoke, then added, "Only in China will you do any uncovering."

Armour shrugged. "Perhaps later."

Quinto's voice dropped, became a whisper that isolated their small group from the restless strands of life within the hotel lobby. He had oddly and abruptly shifted from his Mexican accented English to an accented multi-tonal *kuo-yu* or National Chinese. "It is a pity," he murmured, "that you do not fear the *feng shui.*"

"What?" Armour was startled by the transposition. The switch from English to the involutions of Chinese was artful and full of subtle meaning far beyond the content of Quinto's words. It made the Mexican appear more amazing and Chinese than ever. He had known Chinese who skillfully skipped from their own formulated and flowery language to speak in pidgin in order abruptly to blunt a conversation, making it more metallic and brutal.

"You do not fear *feng shui?*" Quinto's Chinese became almost native, flavored by the patois *erh's* and *nay-guh's,* yet avoiding the harsh, growling tones and rhythms resulting from them.

ARMOUR shook his head, not not quite grasping the man's meaning. There was an implication somewhere of something hidden behind the devious labyrinth of thought. He was acquainted with the intricacies of Chinese superstitions revolving around the *feng shui* or wind-

and-water spirits who were as influential in Chinese life and politics as American loans, who invaded villages and households causing people to reroute streets frantically, or change furniture in order to appease them, but who could be kept out of houses by placing a spirit screen before doorways because the spirits rigidly observed the Chinese belief that they were only permitted to move in straight lines and not turn sharp corners.

"You wish me to expose you?" Quinto said, his voice becoming impatient.

Quinto continued in *kuo-yu,* saying, "*Pu chi tao,* you don't understand and it is so simple. The *feng shui* are sometimes in you. They are exclusive and do not get into most foreigners; only those who understand China and are a part of it. In you, they are the thing which makes you a good archeologist. They give your mind a restlessness when you face the mysteries of history. You dig into the ancient mysteries of China and you do not rest until there is no blank place left, until everything is arranged properly. But now, you lose six years from your own life. They are buried somewhere. Do you think the *feng shui* of doubt will let you rest?"

Armour was silent for a moment. He felt Adrian's fingers digging into his arm and he knew that she had not followed the man's rapid Chinese. Quinto's curious attack, so Oriental in its suggestiveness, so unreal except when placed against the tapestry of China, disturbed him deeply. There was no doubt that Quinto was playing upon his uneasy and desperate desire to break through the curtain hiding his past, and the Mexican had played his words neatly and expertly.

Armour fought back the appeal. "No. My mind is made up," he answered.

"You wish me to expose you?" Quinto said, his voice becoming impatient. "I will announce to Shanghai that you were not the guerrilla, Chiao. Perhaps there will be doubt then, perhaps some will say you collaborated with the Japanese if you cannot explain your loss of memory."

Armour smiled slowly. "You'll find it difficult to make it stick," he said. "There was a Chiao, a foreigner. The consulate and press agree that I was Chiao."

"*Ai que chi.*" The Mexican's lips curled in scorn. "I have lent you the Chiao history so that you would help me. But I did not give it to you for always, *hombre.* There are too many farmers in Shantung who know that Quinto has sometimes fought under the name of Chiao."

"You?"

"*Si, claro.*" The Mexican's smile widened a fraction.

"I'll take the chance," Armour answered. He linked his arm in Adrian's.

Quinto shrugged his shoulders despondently and in that simple gesture there was something of the Orient's atmosphere of limitless time and the futility of individual endeavor upon so vast a canvas as China's. Then he murmured, "It is a sadness, Señor, that you let yourself become one of the *Hai Shang shuo-mang jen,* the Shanghai Sleepwalkers."

"Sleepwalkers?" Adrian asked.

"Ayi, Señora. It is what the people now call the foreigner in Shanghai who was here before the war, who went away, and who has come back. They do not understand the changes in China, *sabe?* They walk around in a sleep. This is because there is a blank place in their memories. They do not remember what happened in the wartime and how the changes in China began. So they cannot share in the ways of New China. A historical sadness, eh?"

"Interesting," Armour nodded. He began to walk with Adrian toward the breakfast room. "We're going to be pretty busy," he said. "Got clothes to get. Check in at the consulate again. By the way, I'd better return your gun."

"You keep it, *por favor,*" Quinto answered. "You will need it in America. I am told it is very lawless there." The huge, cat-like Mexican stopped, letting them go on alone to the breakfast-room.

FOLLOWING breakfast they returned to Adrian's suite. The tailor already awaited them to make the final fitting of Armour's clothes. Later, they lunched in their room, then Mr. Byrnes appeared.

The news editor seemed less cheerful than when Armour had seen him last. He thrust a Chinese newspaper, the *Shanghia Shih Hsin Pao,* before Armour, saying, "I thought my paper was to get first crack. Looks like you gave an interview to the Chinese papers before ours."

"I didn't give any."

"Well, it's there."

"Where?"

"It's marked. I don't read the stuff. What do I hire interpreters for?" Byrnes paced the room, ye[illegible]is movements had nothing of the urgent restlessness of most newsmen. It was deliberate and solid, the walk of a Shanghai *taipan,* the colonial, the Old Hand. "What's this about you hunting for old Bronzes? T'angs, huh? Thought you were going home?"

Armour found the marked article, a curious combination of interview and essay—the impression of a Mr. Armour who had served China as the guerrilla fighter, Chiao, during the war, and his thoughts on returning to Shanghai. At one point the Mr. Armour in the article announced that he was remaining in China in order to search for certain valuable T'ang Bronzes which had disappeared during the war.

He looked up at Byrnes and Adrian and laughed. He remembered Quinto had once insisted that he should make himself visible in Shanghai in the hope that someone would come forth to identify him, to link him with his past. "I think this must be Wu's work," he said. "It has the touch of the *superior journalist.*"

Byrnes looked confused.

"The Chinese who brought the first story about Dave," Adrian explained.

"Him?" Byrnes grunted. "Then you didn't give this out?"

"No."

The newsman stopped before Armour, eyeing him shrewdly. "T'ang Bronzes," he said. "Tell me all about them, Armour." He pulled a notebook from his pocket.

"Why? There's nothing," Armour replied, his sense of caution aroused.

"I smell a story about T'angs or whatever you call them. Now listen, friend, you've already let my paper get scooped on you once. How about giving out?"

Adrian stood up. "There's not going to be any story about T'angs," she said sharply.

Byrnes swiveled his eyes toward her and raised his brows in surprise. He became aware of the tension between Adrian and her husband. "O.K., Adrian," he agreed, "if that's how it is." Then he said to Armour, "Would you mind just briefing me on Bronzes? You know, the sort of chit-chat we can use for background if anything comes up. I don't pay much attention to art stuff. Costs too much for what you get."

Armour smiled faintly, amused by the man's reaction to Chinese art. It was so typically colonial, so brazenly Old China Hand.

"How about the T'ang ones?" Byrnes

asked as he drew up a chair. "Are they any good?"

"Good—" Armour grinned. "They can't be beat. But I'm not an exclusive authority on Chinese Bronzes nor am I an antiquarian. My work was to dig up and classify anything that reads of the past, anything that aided us in the search for a logic in history. However, I've always gained more than an archeologist's pleasure while looking at old bronzes, whether it happened to be a Chou urn with its high and low thunder patterns or the amazing animal sculpture of the T'ang style period. I used to spend hours gazing at bronzes, trying to understand the men who made them. They give you a feel of men who revered form and balance as no men have done since then." He broke off saying, "But this must annoy you?"

BYRNES shrugged. "It's a bit thick," he commented. "I've seen bronze jars . . . Said to have cost fortunes. Didn't look like it to me."

"Value depends on who you are and how you look at them."

"Does it?"

Armour nodded seriously. "Of course it does," he replied. "For some men the shape and the patina of a piece set its individual worth. But to archeologists and to the Chinese good Bronzes represent more than beauty; they have historical and classical value. Bronzes from any of the style periods—the Chou, the Chin, the Han and the T'ang—reflect something of the state of mind of the men in those times. The T'ang pieces are, of course, the most eloquent. They climax some few thousand years of Bronze craftsmanship. Their animal sculpture was tremendous. They showed the power of the animal, its character and temperament, as no other Chinese sculpture has ever done. Their tigers showed strength and agility; their oxen showed power, and at the same time, the soft, docile . . . "

As he spoke an image flashed into his mind, an image of a fragile-legged water buffalo with the philosopher Lao-Tse upon its back. It had none of the black and white optic flatness of a thing conjured up from words. There was something stereoptic about it, a solidity and measurability, as if he had once touched it, knew its particular texture, the exact tone of its patina and the feel of its weight.

His voice went on mechanically: "The T'angs, of all Chinese Bronzes, most definitely reflected the vigor of their period. It was one of China's great periods of political prosperity. From the days of T'ai Tsung to the Ming Emperors the empire reached to the Caspian Sea and through India. An age of individualism, exploration and border expansion. During this period the monk Hsün Tsan returned from India with copies of famous Buddhist images whose freedom of design and realism helped the T'ang artisans break away from the hieraticism and stylization of Ch'in and Han periods . . . "

Unnerved by the image which had flared in his memory and now faded, he broke off the conversation and went to the desk, picking up the Emperor Ch'ien Lung catalogue. Oblivious of the curious stares from both Adrian and Byrnes, he frantically paged through the book until he found the description of the Lao-Tse buffalo bronze. *There was no woodcut illustration of the figure.* His heart began beating faster, spurred on by the certainty that the optic surprise had been no illusion. The Lao-Tse Bronze was a reality. For one irrevocable moment the veil of his memory had parted, permitting him a flashing glimpse of a tangible something which he still could not place in its proper relationship with other objects and events in time and space.

Adrian's troubled voice cut across his thoughts. "Dave—what is it?"

He put the book down slowly. Noticing the Japanese automatic on the desk, he put it in his pocket without the conscious memory of having made the motion.

"What's wrong?" Adrian came toward him.

"Nothing."

"You look as if you've seen a ghost."

He held his arm around her for a moment. "It's really nothing," he lied. "Tell you later."

He slowly returned to the chair facing Byrnes. The newsman watched him with open curiosity. "Sorry for the interruption." Armour told him. "Shall I go on?"

"Sure thing."

Now, he could no longer suppress his enthusiasm and feeling of urgency. The

talk of Bronzes had pushed up a fragmentary image from the well of his memory, and now he began talking with unflagging eagerness, like a man casting words of bait upon an opaque pool, hoping something more would rise to it.

"Not all T'ang bronzes are good," he said, "any more than all Ming ceramics are good. A lot depends on casting, on the accumulated patina and inscriptions. Until the late Mings, the lost-wax method of casting gave the Bronzes some of their exquisiteness."

"Lost-wax?" Byrnes looked confused.

"Yes, lost-wax," he repeated impatiently. "It's the complicated process of modeling the wax figure over a fireproof core of clay. After the wax is sculpted in full detail a thin covering of plaster is poured over the wax, making a continuous and unbroken mold. Then the wax is melted out. Bronze alloy is poured in to replace it. Some Bronzes are made paper thin this way. When a figure or bowl was completed, history took over the responsibility of completing the job. During wars and bad times people buried their Bronzes. Chemicals in the soil, and moisture, caused patination or oxidization of the metal. A good patina is highly prized—"

THERE was a knock on the door. He paused, watching Adrian as she answered it. The Number One boy's grinning face appeared briefly. He handed her a letter.

"It's for you, David," she said. She brought him the letter.

He glanced at the envelope indifferently. It was addressed in the running style Chinese *ts'ao-tzu* or "grass characters." Annoyed by the interruption, still trying to revive lost memory with his headlong talk about Bronzes, he went on.

"You know, Byrnes," he said rapidly. "The Chinese feel that the best pieces have a velvety black patina or a warm golden glow. It's curious that Americans always prefer the green. However, it's the finish that really makes patina stand out. After Bronzes have been dug up from their hiding places the Chinese work them over. They polish the patina down with the human hand so that the skin-oil helps the burnishing. Generations of servants, polishing and polishing, give a piece a kind of glow no contemporary Bronze can hope to have. I've seen some gold inlay and gilded pieces so wonderfully finished the play of color on them equals that of the finest Ming porcelain . . . "

He paused, his thoughts groping blindly for some stray word which might unlock another recess of his memory. He tapped the edge of the envelope on his knee.

"Gilding—" he began again, desperately. "Gilding is a lost art. Took a year or more to gild a Bronze properly and no one has the time now. More than a thousand years ago T'ang artisans used to cast their pieces and, after etching the metal, they'd soak them in solutions of herbs and fruit acids. Months later, they heated the Bronzes, rubbed mercury and gold leaf into the surface, then the gold and mercury was volatilized by intense firing. The pieces were allowed to cool for a period of months and the job was finally finished by burnishing the gold that still adhered . . . "

He began to be aware that Mr. Byrnes was staring at him as though he might have been an idiot. He broke off disappointedly, filled with a sense of helpless frustration because there had been no reawakening within him. "I'm not much of a salesman, am I?" He smiled.

Byrnes reply was politely noncommittal. Armour opened the letter which Adrian had given him. The note was penned in a neat, formal English. As he read it, he heard Byrnes saying something about collectors and exporters and souvenirs, then the newsman's voice faded as though caught in a distant wind.

Mon Cher David:

In these four months I have searched for you endlessly. Now, magically, you have reappeared, but you have not come to me. In the Cathay you stared at me, yet you did not seem to want to recognize me. What has happened between us, David? If I have done something wrong, let me repair it . . .

Your devoted wife,

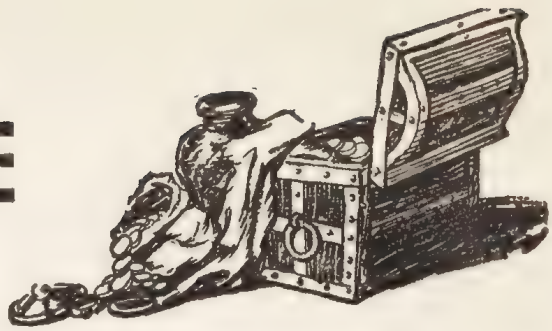
Etoile

24 Rue Cardinal Mercier

(END OF PART III)

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere



PIRATE gold Down East in Maine.

Query:—I am interested in learning if any searches have been conducted for pirates' treasures on the coast of Maine. If so, who were the pirates believed to have hidden treasure on that coast?

—Edgar W. Hayes
3251 Asbury Ave.,
Ocean City, N. J.

Reply by "Chief" Stanwood:—Many have dug for Capt. Kidd's gold along the coasts of Maine and Canada. To my knowledge no one ever found any of his hoard.

One Captain Bellamy, in his ship the *Whidaw* carrying many millions of gold, is supposed to have sailed up the Machias River, built a fort, buried his gold some place along the river, and returned to sea in quest of more loot. His ship was sunk and as far as is known the treasure is still along the river. Some years ago I went over the site of the old fort. Plenty of places to hide it as the river has high banks along the shore and they could have unloaded it from the ship.

In 1840 a farmer found some 700 pieces of eight at Castine.

In 1855 a farmer ploughing at Casco Bay turned up an earthen crock full of coin minted in Queen Elizabeth's day.

Another spot quite a few coins were found is Jewell's Island off Portland. This was in 1798.

Personally, I know of one find of around $8,000 quite a few years ago at Raccoon Cove.

EVEN the first mile's a tough one—if you run it.

Query:—I intend to go out for track at school next year and want to try for the mile run. Do you think I should practice this summer? Could you give me an average workout plan that I can follow? Also any exercises that might be beneficial? I weigh 135 lbs. and am 5′ 3″. Although this is average, I am stocky and seemingly short. Do you think this is a major handicap?

—James Hawley
406 Madison St.,
Buffalo, 12, N. Y.

Reply by Jackson Scholz:—I wouldn't take the mile run too seriously if I were you, not for a while at any rate. It too often happens that high school men with real distance-running talent leave all of their racing on the high school track, and hence never attain the peak of which they are capable.

A good miler must be a matured man, because only physical maturity can stand up under the hard grind of distance running. The mile is a hard race, and a man must possess full bodily development to run it properly.

This does not mean, however, that you can't play around with the distances if you enjoy running. The point is, not to overdo it at this stage. Do all the running you want to, but always stop before you are really tired. Never exhaust yourself, or put undue strain upon your heart. You'll regret it later if you do.

Don't bother about time, just jog for the fun of it, and you will find that the distance you can jog without strain will increase automatically.

Lack of height in a miler is not necessarily a handicap. Joie Ray, one of our greatest milers, was a short man. The legs of a miler, however, should be flexible and loose, not too heavily muscled. Otherwise they have a tendency to tie up in the last stages of a race.

If your legs and hips have a tendency toward tightness, the simple exercise of high-kicking will help a lot. Take it easy at first. Keep your knee stiff, and practice until you can kick well above your head.

OF venomous insects and snakes—their hibernation habits and curative values.

Query:—Do butterflies, the black widow spider, tarantulas, centipedes, scorpions, ticks and poisonous snakes hibernate for short periods during the wintertime in Southern Florida, Southern Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and Southern California? If so, for what length of time?

Does medical science use the venom of black widow spiders, tarantulas, centipedes, scorpions and poisonous snakes? If so, for what purpose?

—John Gresock
611 E. 8th St.,
Erie, Penna.

Reply by Dr. S. W. Frost:—Many insects and spiders dwelling in southern United States do not hibernate as they do in the North.

This is especially true of southern Florida, Texas and California. In Arizona and New Mexico, particularly in the northern portions, they probably have short hibernating periods. The same conditions hold for greenhouses in the North. Here the temperatures are very uniform and insects, which normally hibernate, may continue to reproduce and pass through one generation after the other.

The venom of many of the poisonous animals that you mention is extracted and used to produce antivenins. This is particularly true of snakes. I have frequently seen the venom removed from tropical snakes such as the bushmaster, which is eventually prepared for use as a serum to counteract snake bites. Rattlesnake antivenin is commonly kept on hand by most doctors for emergencies.

The venom of the black widow and scorpions has been extracted for the same purpose. There has been some question as to the specific value of the antivenin made from black widow venom. Other types of treatments have been more satisfactory. The tarantula is not rated as fatal to adults and hence antivenins are not used.

You might be interested to know that the venom of the honey bee is extracted and used for the treatment of human diseases especially certain types of arthritis.

HOW not to cut a curve.

Query:—We have a small circular saw mill with a 24" saw. We are set up in a small saw mill and shipping box business.

Our trouble is that we can not make our saw lead a straight line. We have set our lead repeatedly both in and out by very small fractions at a time, but still the blade loses its lead and runs a circle or a curve. We have also tried the speed up and down from 1000 R.P.M.'s, likewise we have had a file and set job on the blade from a very reliable source.

Any help you can give us will be appreciated as we are losing a very fair business.

—Kenneth H. Conover
Conover Bros.
R. D. # 1
Hightstown, N. J.

Reply by Hapsburg Liebe:—It is a little difficult to judge from this distance what is wrong with the saw. Here is a list of things that can make a roundsaw misbehave:

The saw not level, bumpy.

Not properly tensioned (central parts opened to allow for rim expansion by centrifugal force); unevenly tensioned. This opening is done by hammering on hard anvil, and requires skill.

If you are running a "briar" or spring set, this is probably the trouble. This kind of set won't take the feed that a swaged set will take.

Too little pitch, or hook, especially on extreme points of the teeth. Points not filed squarely across. Too short or too long spacing of the teeth. (The latter not likely.)

Too little or too much clearance for the body of the saw. If too little, the saw will heat. Soft woods require more clearance than hardwoods. The latter requires more pitch, or hook.

Gullets, or throats, too shallow to chamber the sawdust properly. Keep them rounded out, not filed to a sharp corner.

Saw too thin for the work. A saw that is too thin is hard to make stand up.

Power that is too light so that the saw pulls down.

End-play in the mandril, or shaft. Keep collars snugged up.

Carriage track not straight (unlikely). If your carriage is equipped with an off-set, see that it is in good order.

Small logs sometimes spring—usually outward in the middle—as they are sawn, and make the saw cut a "curve". If this is the case with you, it is not the fault of the saw. There should be three headblocks and the log dogged up tightly.

If nothing in the above points the way out for you, I see nothing to do but send the saw back to its maker. If you do this, be sure to tell him what you are cutting, both kind of wood and size of it, and describe the saw's misbehavior. Of course, if you can find a saw man who really knows his business, around there somewhere, it would save you a good deal of time and expense. Good saw men are pretty hard to find, outside of a saw-maker's plant.

MY Friend—without a barrel.

Query:—I recently added to my collection an old time firearm, which is a stranger to me, and I am therefore calling on you for help to identify it.

The revolver is a .22-caliber, seven-shot gun with NO BARREL. The chamber holding the seven shots revolves as in any other revolver and is so long the cylinder itself acts as the barrel. The gun is single action, and the only identification marks are the serial number and the words "My Friend Pat. Dec. 28 (or 26) 1861".

Can you give me any information on this gun? What is its value if any? The gun is in perfect mechanical condition.

—Col. H. H. H. Clark, A.C.
United States Army Retired
642 Ramona
Whittier, Calif.

Reply by Donegan Wiggins:—The arm you describe was made by the following firm: J. Reid, New York, N. Y. It was a product of the sixties of the past century, and seems to have had only a limited sale. They were made in .22 rimfire, like your own, and .32 and .41 rimfire as well.

I think I'm one of the few arms collectors who does not possess a specimen, but I am familiar with them from cleaning one up some years since—a former jewelry salesman's pet "protection" (?).

According to Lieut. Chapel, ("The Gun Collector's Handbook of Values") the value runs from $20.00 to $30.00. He gives the patent date as Dec. 26, 1865.

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. **Air Mail** is quicker for foreign service!

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to the magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, financial backing or employment.

✱*(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)*

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

Archery—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure.*

Auto Racing—WILLIAM CAMPBELL GAULT, c/o *Adventure.*

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, care of *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Matawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

Camping—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Dogs—FREEMAN LLOYD, care of *Adventure.*

Fencing—COL. JEAN V. GROMBACH, care of *Adventure.*

Fishing: *Fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait camping outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, care of *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting Tournament—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, c/o *Adventure.*

Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, 3225 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee 8, Wis.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, care of *Adventure.*

Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6520 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *Foreign and American*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, 170 Liberty Rd., Salem, Oregon.

Shotguns, American and Foreign: Wing Shooting and Field Trials—ROY S. TINNEY, Chatham, New Jersey.

Skiing—WILLIAM C. CLAPP, The Mountain Bookshop, North Conway, N. H.

Small Boating: *Skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Swords, Spears, Pole Arms and Armor—MAJOR R. E. GARDNER, care of *Adventure.*

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 1, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal, customs, dress, architecture; pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 E. Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, care of *Adventure.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.

Herpetology: *Reptiles and amphibians*—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure.*

Mining, Prospecting, and Precious Stones: *Anywhere in North America. Prospectors' outfitting; any mineral, metallic or non-metallic*—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure.*

Ornithology: *Birds, their habits, and distribution*—DAVIS QUINN, 5 Minerva Pl., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: *Outfitting, work in out-of-the way places; general information*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Radio: *Telegraphy, telephony, history, receiver construction, portable sets*—DONALD MCNICOL, care of *Adventure*.

Railroads: *In the United States, Mexico and Canada*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling:—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*.

Sunken Treasure: *Treasure ships; deep-sea diving; salvage operations and equipment*—LIEUTENANT HARRY E. RIESENBERG, care of *Adventure*.

Taxidermy—EDWARD B. LANG, 14 N. Burnett St., East Orange, N. J.

Wildcrafting and Trapping—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE

United States Army—COL. R. G. EMERY, U.S.A., Ret., care of *Adventure*.

United States Marine Corps—MAJ. ROBERT H. RANKIN, U.S.M.C.R., care of *Adventure*.

United States Navy—LIEUT. DURAND KIEFER, U.S.N., Ret., Box 74, Del Mar, Calif.

Merchant Marine—KERMIT W. SALYER, c/o *Adventure*.

Military Aviation—O. B. MYERS, care of *Adventure*.

Federal Investigation Activities—*Secret Service, Immigration, Customs, Border Patrol, etc.*—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

The French Foreign Legion—GEORGES SURDEZ, care of *Adventure*.

State Police—FRANCIS H. BENT, care of *Adventure*.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Conner Field, Quartzsite, Ariz.

★New Guinea—L. P. B. ARMIT, care of *Adventure*.

★New Zealand, Cook Island, Samoa—TOM L. MILLS, 27 Bowen St., Feilding, New Zealand.

★Australia and Tasmania—ALAN FOLEY, 243 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia.

★South Sea Islands—WILLIAM MCCREADIE, No. 1 Flat "Scarborough," 83 Sidney Rd., Manley, N. S. W., Australia.

Madagascar—RALPH LINTON, Dept. of Anthropology, Columbia University, N. Y., N. Y.

Africa, Part 1 ★*Libya, Morocco, Egypt, Tunis, Algeria, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*—CAPT. H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C. **2** Abyssinia, Italian Somaliland, British Somali Coast Protectorate, Eritrea, Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya—GORDON MACCREAGH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *Tripoli, Sahara caravans*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Bechuanaland, Southwest Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, Egyptian Sudan and French West Africa*—MAJOR S. L. GLENISTER, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Cape Province, Orange Free State, Natal, Zululand, Transvaal, Rhodesia*—PETER FRANKLIN, Box 1491, Durban Natal, So. Africa.

Asia, Part 1 ★*Siam, Malay States, Straits Settlements, Java, Sumatra, Dutch East Indies, Ceylon*—V. B. WINDLE, care of *Adventure*. **4** *Persia, Arabia*—CAPTAIN BEVERLY-GIDDINGS, care of *Adventure*. **5** ★*Palestine*—CAPTAIN H. W. EADES, 3808 West 26th Ave., Vancouver, B. C.

Europe, Part 1 ★*The British Isles*—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., London, W.C. 2, England. **2** *Denmark, Germany, Scandinavia*—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Central America—ROBERT SPIERS BENJAMIN, care of *Adventure*.

South America Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile*—EDGAR YOUNG, care of *Adventure*. **2** ★*Argentina*—ALLISON WILLIAMS BUNKLEY, Calle O'Higgins 2150, Buenos Aires, Argentina. **3** ★*Brasil*—ARTHUR J. BURKS, c/o Alto Tapajos, Rua Gaspar Viana, 18, Belem, Para, Brazil.

West Indies—JOHN B. LEFFINGWELL, c/o *Adventure*.

Iceland—G. I. COLBRON, care of *Adventure*.

Baffinland and Greenland—VICTOR SHAW, care of *Adventure*.

Labrador—WILMOT T. DEBELL, care of *Adventure*.

Mexico, Part 1 *Northern Border States*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex. **2** *Quintana Roo, Yucatan, Campeche*—CAPTAIN W. RUSSELL SHEETS, care of *Adventure*. **3** ★ *West Coast beginning with State of Sinaloa. Central and Southern Mexico including Tabasco and Chiapas*—WALLACE MONTGOMERY, Club Americano, Bolivar 31, México, D.F.

Canada, Part 1 ★*Southeastern Quebec*—WILLIAM MACMILLAN, 89 Laurentide Ave., Quebec, Canada. **2** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario*—HARRY M. MOORE, 579 Isabella, Pembroke, Ont., Canada. **4** ★*Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario, National Parks Camping* — A. D. L. ROBINSON, 103 Wembly Rd., Toronto, Ont., Can. **5** ★*Northern Saskatchewan; Indian life and language, hunting, trapping*—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Alaska—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 6520 Romaine St., Hollywood, Calif.

Western U. S., Part 1 *Pacific Coast States*—FRANK WINCH, care of *Adventure*. **3** *New Mexico; Indians, etc.*—H. F. ROBINSON, 1236 N. 8th St., Albuquerque, New Mexico. **4** *Nevada, Montana and Northern Rockies*—FRED W. EGELSTON, Elks' Home, Elko, Nev. **5** *Idaho and environs*—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill. **6** *Arizona, Utah*—C. C. ANDERSON, care of *Arizona Stockman*, Arizona Title Bldg., Phoenix, Ariz. **7** *Texas, Oklahoma*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2093 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S., Part 2 *Ohio River and Tributaries and Mississippi River*—GEO. A. ZERR, 31 Cannon St., Pittsburgh, 5, Penna. **3** *Lower Mississippi from St. Louis down, Louisiana swamps, St. Francis, Arkansas Bottom*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S., Part 1 *Maine*—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me. **2** *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., Mass.*—HOWARD R. VOIGHT, P. O. Box 716, Woodmont, Conn. **3** *Adirondacks, New York*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, 11331 Burin Ave., Inglewood, Calif. **5** *Ala., Tenn., Miss., N. C.; S. C., Fla., Ga.*—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*. **6** *The Great Smokies and Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

(Continued from page 6)

back to the saloon of the *Cabo Delgado*. It is a mixture of fact and fiction. There was an Ovambo chief who died in just the way Devenny describes in the story, but his name was not Bunyoyo; and, of course, we all know that Government never makes mistakes, particularly ghastly ones. There is an old German fort in Ovamboland and the tale told of it during German occupation, if true, would make the blood of the most rabid Nazi run cold. The present-day administration of the territory is as outlined in the story and, in a country where there is so much to criticize in the government of subject peoples, very creditable it is to the Union of South Africa. The rest is just fiction.

AND Jules Archer, who takes us "down under" to the other side of the world in "A Dingo for Delilah" on page 84, indites the following to introduce his story and himself—

Dingoes are damned beautiful animals. The first time my wife—who is Australian—saw one, she couldn't believe it was the killer she'd heard so much about. The average dingo is collie-sized, with an orange-yellow coat, wolf-like jaws and an intelligent gleam in his eyes. Unless you knew better, you'd want to ruffle his fur and pat his flanks affectionately.

But the dingo *is* a killer. By man-made standards, anyhow. He slays sheep and cattle for food. More serious, he kills them as frequently for the pure blood-lust of killing. In Australia his name is synonymous with an epithet. And he has frequently been called cowardly, possibly because the dingo rarely attacks a human being. But the dingo is no craven. He will fight courageously when he has to, and will bite off his own leg to get out of a trap.

Dingoes sometimes run in packs. But the average warrigal, like Hoppy in my story, prefers to hunt alone, or with his mate. To give the devil his due, the dingo is something many a human is not—a devoted, monogamous husband and father.

He has developed almost-human intelligence—cunning, if you will—in outwitting man's attempt to destroy him. For the most wary of warrigals, traps, poison baits and guns wait in vain. In his long fight for survival, he has sometimes won unexpected allies. When cattle men began offering bounties of $5 for every dingo scalp or tail, some enterprising Aussies secretly set up dingo-breeding farms in the bush. Others caught dingoes, cut off the animals' tails, and turned them loose to breed more bounty candidates.

Delilah, the decoy warrigal in my story, is described as a trained dingo. Are there really such animals? Yes, indeed. Australian aborigines often catch them at an early age, and train them for hunting. Native women have even been known to suckle dingo pups at their own breasts, weaning the warrigals into faithful, devoted and useful pets. As the story points out, however, once a dingo tastes sheep's blood, his role as man's ally is suspect.

The use of the trained dingo by the Dingo Destruction Board is entirely my own idea, I must admit. But as unusual ideas go, it is far less fabulous than the Board's own recently announced intention to hunt dingoes from airplanes. The Board, which really exists in Australia, is actually under the auspices of the New South Wales state government. But it operates federally, dividing Australia into dingo destruction districts, each with its own organization of trappers and hunters.

The most famous—or infamous—dingo outlaws in Australia's history have had fancy prices on their heads, offered by infuriated stockmen. In recent years the price paid for any dead dingo has been about $16, with prize sums of $100 to $200 for some of the more distinguished raiders.

A top price of $1,400 was paid as recently as 1945 to George Hunter of Western Australia for killing the dingo with the worst reputation in Australian history—Bullockfoot. The famous outlaw finally met his downfall in Hunter's trap, baited with a freshly-killed wild turkey. The trap's teeth were wound around with cotton wool saturated in treacle and strychnine, which poisoned Bullockfoot when he tried to bite free.

I saw a good deal of Australia—intermittently—during the war, and for the half-year afterward that I returned. It's a wonderful country, dingoes and all. Actually it might surprise Americans to hear that a large percentage of Aussies have never seen a dingo, except at the Sydney or Melbourne zoo. The bulk of the population down under is concentrated on the eastern and southern seaboard, in large cities. The dingoes roam the "outback," the sparsely-populated country regions of the interior.

Nearest I ever came to killing a dingo myself was in the Queensland bush, early in the war. I was driving a jeep through a bush road—you saw the bush, but rarely the road—when one streaked across my front wheels, and fled for his life.

Scared the hell out of me.

The Milne Bay invasion in New Guinea scared me, too. So did the daily bombings and strafings there and in the Markham Valley. So did . . . Hell, I'm developing into an old war-bore already. Suffice it that I spent every week of the war but the first six in Australia, New Guinea and the Philippines.

To begin at the beginning, I was born, bred and bored in New York. Kicked over the traces as early (or late) as 23. Told my boss what to do with his ad-copywriting job, took all my dough out of the bank and sailed for Europe. I biked and loafed around England, France Switzerland and Italy until all I had left was two 1912 pennies, my boat ticket home, and a valuable cargo of French vin rouge and cointreau.

Went back to huckstering, with a year of movie publicity, to keep my belly button and spinal cord separated. Spent every spare second wooing nature on skis, bike, fold-

boat, sailboat and even, for a precious week, on a windjammer. December 7, 1941, all that ended.

As far as I'm concerned, my outstanding contribution to the war effort was, as a lowly Master Sergeant, my success in getting my commanding officer kicked out of our platoon for riding the boys with garrison spit-and-polish while we were in the combat zone, up to our ears in lead rain. That's a wonderful memory for any ex-G.I. to cherish.

During my four years overseas, national magazines gave me space to tell the folks back home, in articles and yarns, how it was over there. I've been doing it ever since. With my wife and two sons, I inhabit a cottage in Sharon, Connecticut, where I take out my nostalgia for Australia with yarns like "A Dingo for Delilah."

RAY Mackland, whose "Death and a Pair of Shoes" is on page 81 this issue, is on the editorial staff of "Life." He sends the following notations to accompany his amusing bit of Western badman lore—

I was born, and went through high school in Council Bluffs, Ia., an historic town which lost out in the race for growth and prestige to Omaha, Neb., just across the Missouri River.

Entering Omaha, travelers see a sign saying that this is where the West begins. That would make Council Bluffs the end of the East but Council Bluffs always has felt that rightfully, it should be known as the beginning of the West.

Lewis and Clark stopped on the east side of the Missouri, among the bluffs, for a council with the Indians in 1804. In 1846 the migrating Mormons established a town, called Kanesville, but later changed to Council Bluffs. It was a key outfitting point for California gold seekers.

A high mark in the history of Council Bluffs was a visit in 1859 by Abraham Lincoln. A monument marks the spot, high on a hill, where he looked across the river to the plains stretching far to the West, and decided that Council Bluffs would be the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad. Council Bluffs is the terminus, but Omaha got the headquarters! Council Bluffs, with a population of 41,000, remains the fifth largest rail center in the country but Omaha is five times larger and the fourth biggest.

When as boys we roamed the bluffs, every grass-grown wagon rut was considered to be the trail made by Lewis and Clark. A favorite after-school pastime was digging for Indian skeletons and beads. Every Council Bluffs boy was proud of Union Pacific railroad history.

At the age of 16, while a senior in high school, I became a cub reporter, working after school and nights. I worked my way through college on newspapers and afterward continued to work on the Omaha *World-Herald*. In 1939, in conjunction with the premiere of the movie "Union Pacific," Omaha held a big celebration, with beards and gingham dresses, called Golden Spike Days, celebrating the aniversary of the completion of the U. P. As rotogravure editor, I was in charge of a special issue featuring early-day pictures.

Working in the Union Pacific museum, I came upon a few details of the story of Big Nose George. I was fascinated by it, but it had no place in the special issue. I always wanted to check into it, but didn't get the time, and shortly afterward came east to work in Washington and New York. On a vacation last year in Omaha, one of my first visits was to the U. P. museum to find out what had happened to Big Nose.

Now I know—and so do you.

AND Carl Horn, whose "Keels for the Klondike" appears on page 102, writes from Bellingham, Washington—

Request for *Camp-Fire* notations caught me moving into a sort of a country place (an acre with a creek), ten months neglected and the growing season on Puget Sound lowland a lush thing.

Dropping the brush hook, I might reveal that I was born on Orcas Island, second largest of the San Juan group of Pig War fame, when Bob Moran was in earlier stages of building the vast estate of his retirement there.

My father was the actively practicing medico of this entirely island county, traveling from bedside to bedside by horse-and-buggy, motorcycle, gasoline launch, and shank's mare. Before I was old at all, he had hitched up and driven his family around a mountainous road to the cove where he was guest of the retired Seattle ship-builder.

Bob Moran took one look at me, another at my mother, called for a baby buggy to be dug out of storage, and detailed a maid to keep me occupied and allow my mother a rest. I never got to know the man personally.

But my childhood was punctuated with tales of this fabulous estate at Rosario, striking in its contrast to rough-hewn village life. We squinted under kerosene lamps but electric lights burned there constantly, inside and out. Complete private wood-working and machine shops hummed during working hours. A cargo of forty-two mahogany logs had arrived from South America to be turned into trimmings for the house. Everything but the plate glass, even teakwood furniture, was made on the premises. A sea water-fed swimming pool had been blasted out of solid rock. The finest Aeolian pipe organ on the Pacific Coast had been installed. Four hundred persons could enjoy theatricals in the two-floored music room. Five hundred could be housed comfortably in the main building, planned like a ship . . .

When I began scribbling about persons and places in the Pacific Northwest, Bob Moran was past eighty, quite unchanged in spirit and available by correspondence. A tidy man, he had disposed of his 6000 square miles, most of it given to the state for a park,

sold the house and immediate surroundings, and retired further to a simple house across the inlet.

My earliest impressions made it hard to believe that he had arrived in Seattle in 1875 with ten cents in his pocket. Such is the case. Moran was born in New York in 1857, left school at fourteen, and reached the West Coast as a ship's steerage passenger. His career hit its peak when his ship-building concern constructed the battleship *Nebraska* in 1904. A millionaire at forty-seven, he retired to a life of constant building activity on Orcas, because of a suspected heart ailment. Away from the strain of competitive business, he lived until 1943, a vigorous eighty-six years. Seattle, experts point out, owes its original leadership in steel ship construction to Moran-trained personnel.

I retrieve my brush hook with some misgiving about the years before *I* hit forty-seven. "He who can does." I just write about it.

ARTHUR J. Burks, who joins our staff of *Ask Adventure* experts this month to handle queries on Brazil, has a background of writing as well as adventuring which ought to have brought him to these pages long since. Rising to introduce himself at *Camp-Fire* for the first time, he says—

I was born in Washington State, in 1898, within a day's ride of the location of Grand Coulee Dam—which was being promoted even at that time, though on September 13, my birthday, nobody took the matter up with me. I was a farmer, and a good one, being one of the first white settlers into Colville Indian Reservation when it was opened, until World War One changed the world for me as for so many others, and set me forth on travels that were never to lead back to the farm—to date, that is.

I was an enlisted man, an NCO, to the end of the war, when I was commissioned a second lieutenant and ordered into the Reserve. During 21 months in the Reserve I was helping, in Washington, to take the Fourteenth Census, under Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce at the time. In 1921 —I began collecting rejection slips in 1920, by the way—I was offered a permanent commission in the Marine Corps. I accepted, and for a period of seven years I wrote, and carried out orders which gave me two and a half years of service in the Dominican Republic and Haiti, visits to such places as Panama, Hawaii, Philippine Islands, China, Manchuria and Japan. Have seen Central America, Formosa and Korea from the decks of various vessels. Finding myself embarrassingly productive as a writer, I resigned outright from the Marine Corps in February 1928, as a first lieutenant. I had served in San Diego as aide de camp to General Smedley Butler, "Old Gimlet Eye." When I left the Corps I estimated that at the rate of promotion then in force, it would take me over thirty more years to become a captain.

For fourteen years I was a professional writer in New York and Hollywood—strangely, never until now having occasion to introduce myself in *Adventure*.

On a memorable afternoon, December 7, 1941, I wired Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington: "Awaiting orders at 11 West 74th street, NYC." Two weeks later I had 'em—orders to report to 90 Church Street, to say "Ah!" without my clothes on. Waivered on eyesight and corpulence, returned to the Marine Corps in early 1942 as a captain, where I was tossed into basically training marines, despite changes of past fourteen years in all military matters. Promoted major, became training officer, eventually to supervise basic training of approximately 150,000 Marines. Spent 21 months Cuba, training marines, and medium-sized landing craft for amphibious operations, beginning with no knowledge of such operations—but then all Marine Corps officers are regarded as experts and required to prove it.

Ordered inactive status, Reserve, as a lieutenant colonel, 1946—July 10th, which rank I still hold.

As a professional writer and literary snoop, have since visited Puerto Rico, Trinidad, and Brazil. Shall be returning to Brazil in July of this year 1947, to do things too numerous to mention here—at this time.

So fire away at Col. Burks in *Ask Adventure,* gentlemen! He knows his field and won't dodge or duck your queries.

AND William C. Clapp also joins the roster of *Ask Adventure* experts this month. An instructor in Hannes Schneider's ski-school at North Conway, New Hampshire and proprietor of The Mountain Bookshop in that snow-conscious village—he specializes in books on skiing and mountaineering—with a background which includes working in ski and sports shops as well as writing articles on the sport for various magazines, he will answer questions on equipment, techniques and other phases of skiing for you. Only thing he won't promise to come up with is the white stuff!

A RHODE ISLAND reader with a penchant for accuracy sends the following, querying a couple of points in O. B. Myers' story "Live Bait" which we printed in our February issue—

Dear Editor:—

* * * * in the story one Faubusch was referred to as "Kapitan." Is it not more likely that he was "Hauptmann" Faubusch? In the German service a naval captain was a Kapitan, a cavalry captain a Rittmeister. In the

land forces, other than cavalry, a captain was known as a Hauptmann.

Also, how did the American officer get from St. Quentin to Charleroi in two hours?

Sincerely yours,
—Sigmund W. Fischer, Jr.
49 Westminster St.,
Providence 3, R. I.

We forwarded the above along to Author Myers and here's what he replied—

Dear Sir:

The elder Faubusch was unquestionably a "Hauptmann," and was doubtless so addressed by his German confreres. But if he were addressed that way in the story, the average American reader wouldn't know what was meant. This is an instance of literary license; the use of a term known to be technically incorrect, but which will convey the sense better than the correct one. For years I, and other authors, have used the word "Kapitan" in this connotation, because to most readers it suggests an officer of a rank corresponding to our captain, though actually such is not the case. Not one in a thousand catches the discrepancy; in fact, yours is the first reaction I have received. Should I use the term "Hauptmann," I dare say I should receive many more inquiries as to what the devil that word meant.

In writing fiction, the technically correct is frequently sacrificed to the readable. For example, in this story much of the dialogue obviously took place in German or in French, but just as obviously it must be transposed into English for the reader's benefit. Foreign language terms must be limited to a mere spattering, to give color, and the more common ones at that.

As for getting to Charleroi in two hours, I assure you that this is quite possible. I was on an air field just outside of Charleroi for nearly six months during the winter of '44-'45, and later, on my way home from Germany, I was stuck in the assembly area camp at St. Quentin for nearly six weeks. I must have made that round trip half a dozen times. You go north from St. Quentin to take a long, straight stretch into Le Cateau, then through Landrecies and Avesnes, crossing the border at Hestrud, (no border delays for an American military vehicle) then from Beaumont you can cut across direct to Charleroi without going over to get on N-5 at Philippeville. Some of these roads were in a beat-up state early in '45, what with spring thaws and heavy traffic during the Ardennes break-through, but they were pretty well fixed up by that fall.

It is less than 75 miles, and there is no reason why a man couldn't make good time. I was driving it in a captured German staff car, a B.M.W. sedan which some of the boys in my ordnance company had "liberated" in the neighborhood of Wiesbaden before V-E day. The lieutenant in the story used a jeep, but that wouldn't hold him back any. A jeep, commonly known as a jet-propelled wheelbarrow, is capable of just as good, if not better, time over the road, compared to any German-built vehicle, especially when the lieutenant sitting next to the driver says, "Let's see if we can get there in time for chow." Hold your hat!

For a little side bet and a week's expenses in Paris I'll play chauffeur and prove it to you any time. How about it?

Auf Wiedersehen, mein Kapitan!

Sincerely yours,
O. B. Myers

That St. Quentin-Charleroi run seems tightly wrapped up but we're not quite as dubious as Mr. Myers seems to be about the unfamiliarity of our readers with certain foreign words. But then he didn't say "average ADVENTURE reader" and such, we like to think, is a more than usually savvy one, particularly in matters military. It's our impression that "Hauptmann" used correctly might not have been too confusing to too many readers (We'll try it so next time.) but agree that it's difficult to determine just what a judicious and unconfusing spattering of foreign phrases for color amounts to. It's a moot point how many to use, but as long as we sprinkle them through it's probably better to keep 'em accurate. So no more "Kapitans" except in the kraut navy and dirigible service (both fortunately extinct) where the same parallel rank prevailed.

CONSIDERABLE interest was aroused, apparently, by Edgar Young's informative letters in *Ask Adventure* replying to queries about homesteading in Ecuador and the current land-colonization operations there. Many additional queries have come in and Mr. Young offers the following footnotes for those who have asked for further details—

The land in Ecuador is being granted in accordance with the law passed by the national congress and signed by the president a few months ago. It is the consensus of opinion of local politicians and foreign statesmen that regardless of what government succeeds the present one in Ecuador, the decrees and concessions in regard to this land will stand. This prediction is substantiated by the fact that no individual United States or British citizen residing in Ecuador has ever suffered loss of property throughout the nation's former turbulent political history. In a political sense, the only stipulation placed upon the settler is that he shall belong to no party or faction whose aims would be to undermine the democratic system of life. He is not required to relinquish his present citizenship and may retain it for life yet at the same time enjoy

the protection afforded to citizens of Ecuador.

The president says, "We want honest dirt farmers that are looking for a future. We feel that we have something to offer such men—freedom of movement, the right to plant what they please and market it as they choose, religious and personal liberty without too many 'stop' signs. In so far as is possible we have eliminated red tape, needless rules and regulations of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and we want to place the settler on his own, to work out his own problems without undue governmental interference. We believe there are a certain number of people in the United States and Britain who seek individualism, and that is one of the attractions that Ecuador has to offer them."

Another inducement is the complete exemption from taxes for a five-year period. Final deeds will be granted when a homesteader has cleared and planted at least one-fourth of his 124 acres.

If this land is settled up it can easily be possible that the new highway from Esmeraldas will become a more traveled route to the highlands and Quito, the capital, and that Esmeraldas will supplant Guayaquil as the principal port of entry into the republic.

As I have said before, there is some malaria in this section; but there is no cancer, infantile paralysis, heart disease, or scarlet fever, as we have here in the north.

The land will grow balsa, bamboo, quinine, rice, yucca, paja, toquilla (for Panama hats), achiote, cacao, ginger, manila hemp, rubber, castor beans, sugar cane, tobacco, kapok, barbasco, cinnamon, rotenene, essential oils, maguey sisal, coffee, pepper, vanilla, and many other valuable crops. Also, such fruits as papaya, orange, breadfruit, granadilla, fig, avocado, tree tomato, cherimoya, tamarind, pineapple, tangerines, lemons, bananas, naranjilla, melons, and berries. The temperature ranges from 84 to 94 in daytime but a light blanket is needed at night.

An American built hospital in the nearby village of Santo Domingo will serve the colonists. Soil experts from the United States Department of Agriculture, lent to the Ecuador government, state that the land in this belt is comparable to that of Java which has long been recognized as the richest on earth. Java, which is approximately the size of Ecuador, supports a population of fifty million, while Ecuador barely has three million. No wonder Ecuador has land to offer. She is underpopulated, under-developed. The advent of several hundred British and Americans in a small Latin American republic will act as an impetus to the national culture and technology and the president has stated that when the first fifty thousand hectares have been assigned he will set aside additional tracts as the demand justifies new decrees. The president has three goals: 1. To gain population for his country. 2. To have its undeveloped but rich lands worked. 3. To inject new ideas in the nation's backward traditions.

At the very beginning I imagine that marketing will be a problem for certain products, but soon, with the installation of processing plants for extracting oil and preparation of other crops for shipment and local usage, the marketing will grow better by leaps and bounds. Panama at present would be the nearest market for a variety of products because ships pass through constantly, bound for all parts of the world.

The country of course is backward but for those who already speak Spanish or take the trouble to acquire the language there is local culture up at Quito and many of the smaller cities in between. They are about the same as the people in Central America. The hop to Panama Canal Zone is just a few hours by plane and the Zone, as you know, is about like the States or Canada.

The proposition looks good for a fellow who is footloose and free and who doesn't give a damn. The building of a thatched house down there is no great matter. I once had a four-room thatch built in Mexico for $25. Mex. The frame was of poles and I helped with that but I had to get a thatcher to help with the roof, and he was an artist at it. They sleep mainly in hammocks in Ecuador and they have some excellent ones made of Panama hat fiber. A thatch, a hammock, an empty gasoline can for a stove, and a fellow is all set for whatever comes along.

This proposition looks okay to me and at present is the best one that is being offered anywhere in Latin America.

Write to the Ecuadorian, British, American Concession, Casilla 315, Quito, Ecuador for additional information—better use air-mail—and to the Pan American Union, Washington, D. C. for their booklet, "Ecuador" which gives a good general idea of the country.

YOU'LL recall that in the April issue, in this department, Artist Pete Kuhlhoff and Author Everett M. Webber engaged in a bit of speculation as to the proper spelling of James Bowie's brother's name, as it had cropped up in the Webber article on the origin of the famous knife. "Reason" was the way Mr. Webber had it and Pete claimed to have seen it elsewhere as "Rezon," while the "Encyclopedia Britannica" spelled it "Rezin." Mr. Webber's explanation of the various variations was that the Bowies were unschooled folk living among other illiterate or semi-literate frontiersmen and it was perfectly natural for spellings of proper names to become distorted or changed in such an untutored society; that probably all forms of the name were "correct" at one time or another.

We asked if anyone had a better explanation and apparently Reader E. B.

Horton of Russell, Kentucky *has*. At any rate, with no beating about the bush or conjectural meandering, he writes—

> Mr. Webber spells Rezin P. Bowie's name "Reason." His full name was Rezin Pekah Bowie. For the origin of the names Rezin Pekah read *Isaiah, 7th chapter, 1st verse, Holy Bible!*

We read it—

> And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

Sounds mighty *rezinable* to us! They were pretty prone to pick Biblical names for their offspring back in Bowie's time. Anybody want to do any refuting? Maybe we've all been neglecting our Old Testament—except Mr. Horton. We dipped a little further—into the concordance—and came up with, so help us, *Rezon*, son of Eliadah *(Kings, Chapter 11, Verse 23)*. But that's another story and maybe it wouldn't give us a leg to stand on after all!

WE THOUGHT you'd be as interested as we were in the following exchange of letters between L. J. Chilberg of Ephrata, Wash., and R. G. Emery, whose two-part story of Alaska, "Home Is the Warrior," ran in our Oct.-Nov. '46 issues. In the *Camp-Fire* notation which accompanied his story Colonel Emery mentioned that when he was stationed in Alaska his outfit had been instrumental in capturing the chief Jap spy in the Territory, and that this had been accomplished by finding a photograph of the son of Nippon in the uniform of his graduating class at West Point! No name was mentioned and Hirohito's agent was only identified as being "a solid pillar of the coastal community where he had been running a laundry for twenty years."

Now Mr. Chilberg's letter—

Dear Colonel Emery:—

In your *Camp-Fire* notations in the October issue of *Adventure*, relative to your story "Home is the Warrior," you mention the capture of "the chief Jap espionage agent in Alaska."

That sounds like Harry Kawabe whom I knew from 1930 until 1934, then later in 1937. I spent three years as Deputy Collector of Customs and Immigrant Inspector in Seward, Alaska. Also, I was in Seward in November and December, 1941.

I have been all over the Kenai Peninsula, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nome, etc. Spent 15 years in Alaska.

Would like to know, "if now it can be told," just what happened to Harry. I knew in November, 1941, that he had a short-wave radio. Also knew that there were Japs on Kiska in 1936.

Would like very much to hear from you.

—L. J. Chilberg
Ephrata, Washington

And Colonel Emery's reply—

Dear Mr. Chilberg:—

You are right, it was Kawabe whom I had in mind when I referred to the 'chief Jap espionage agent in Alaska'. And what I said was . . . (in the *Camp-Fire*) . . . the sober truth, so far as I know it. Some people may have suspected Kawabe, but I was not one of them. The photograph was discovered during—as I said—a purely routine check-up of *all* Japs in Alaska.

In that regard—counter-espionage in Alaska during the early days of the war—I'd like to refer you to a book called *"Even Jericho,"* by a man named Warner Hall. Published by, I think, Macrae Smith Company, in Philadelphia. It is concerned with just that, and I think the man tells a pretty factual story.

So far as Kawabe's ultimate fate is concerned, I can't tell you much. I last saw him in the stockade at Fort Richardson, at Anchorage, about seven one evening in the spring of 1942. It was a day or two before all of the fish the net had gathered were shipped out to the States and an undisclosed destination. Once they were safely off our hands, we worried no more about them. At that time, just before Dutch Harbor and Midway, we had other things to worry us. Shortly afterward—in August of '42—I went west with the Aleutian Expeditionary Force with a new job, not in Intelligence, and thought no more about Kawabe.

I was interested to see by your letter that you were in Seward up to Pearl Harbor. So was I, that is, for awhile. I was the first CO at Fort Raymond. I came down there with my battalion of the 4th Infantry, from Fort Richardson, and planted the first flag-pole at Raymond. That was in June and July, 1941.

Again, I was pleased to have your letter. I appreciated it. I doubt if you are really interested in getting in touch with Kawabe but, if you are, write me again and I'll try and see what I can find out.

Sincerely,
—R. G. Emery

Anyone know, "if now it can be told," what happened to Harry? We're sort of curious, too, what his just deserts after all those years of "laundrying" turned out to be—and if he got 'em!—K.S.W.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

I guess all of the hundred-odd men in our battery detested Captain Mathew Quincy—detested him just as I did—from the top of his unblocked campaign hat to the soles of his issue shoes. All, that is, except Stuart Medary. He hated Quincy with a blue hatred that burned with a steady flame. . . That was fifteen years ago and neither Stuart nor I had the vaguest idea what had happened to the man. And yet—today when we went back to Corregidor to stand among the ruins Topside and watch the jungle creep in to cover the blackened shells of the barracks and quarters we had all once shared, suddenly Captain Quincy was there with us, striding through the rubble of The Rock, along with Sergeant Mulholland and Private D'Arcy and little Rajeski and McComb and all the rest of the outfit—all despising him—and all admitting he was the greatest soldier we had ever known.

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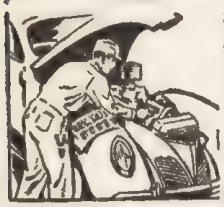

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RAILROAD MAGAZINE

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(Continued from page 93)

ered to Delilah, who cocked her head speculatively. "If it's any satisfaction to you, MacLachlan, Larry's looking out of only one eye this morning. Incidentally," his voice became dryer, "he claims you've lost your bet. You didn't trap Hoppy, and the kill was Larry's. He says that also lets me out of any promise to cooperate with your Board."

"If that's the way you want to look at it," Fred MacLachlan said quietly, gazing squarely into the other man's eyes, "I don't think there's much more to say."

"Don't you?" Jack Carter's eyes were twinkling. "Not even, for instance, that if it hadn't been for Delilah's leading Hoppy back, nobody would ever have got close enough to take a bead on him? And that Hoppy's a dead dingo, just as you promised?"

The young field officer was silent for a moment. Then when he spoke, it was just one word, "Thanks." But there was a warmth and gratitude in it that said everything. The station owner grinned in embarrassment and gripped his shoulder firmly.

"Don't worry about that fifty quid," he said. "Larry's a crook loser, but I owe you the fifty I promised, so you break even anyhow. And . . . and you can tell the Dingo Destruction Board I'm ready to listen to what they've got to say."

Fred MacLachlan gulped. He made an effort to speak again, but this time he wasn't equal to it. Instead he looked down and rubbed the neck fur of the black dingo. A long red tongue protruded between Delilah's jaws and caressed his hand.

"Delilah didn't do all I said she would," he finally forced himself to admit. "But she did deliver the goods anyhow."

"Sure," Carter grinned. "It'll take all the Delilahs you've got to wipe out the big killers. Only—I think this ought to be a lesson to you. Never trust a lady *too* far!"

Carter had something there, Fred MacLachlan thought uncomfortably as he drove along the grass road leading away from Noorie station. He glanced musingly at Delilah, sitting on the seat beside him. She met his glance for a moment, and then her black eyes looked away out the car window toward the distant ranges.

THE END

LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

I am very interested in locating the following buddies of mine. We served in the 26th Regt., First Inf. Div., both in the states and the ETO; in England, Scotland, North Africa, and Sicily, where we were separated. S/Sgt. John Page, about 5′ 7″, 140 lbs., ruddy complexion, reddish brown wavy hair, square features, and about 33 years of age. Page is formerly of Jersey City, N. J. Sgt. George (Big George) Brighindi, 6′ 1″, 200 lbs., olive complexion, black wavy hair, plays guitar. He is from Bridgeport, Conn., about 29. T/Sgt. Arthur (Lippy) Lippman, dark complexion, black thinning wavy hair, about 5′ 6″, slender build, from New York City, is about 32 years old. Any information will be appreciated by Danny Monahan, 354 Water St., Leominster, Mass.

I should like to locate Vernie Baldwin, 35 years old, lived in Live Oak and Jacksonville, Florida, in 1928 and early in the 30's. He is related to John Sterling and is the son of B. O. Baldwin. Please write J. E. Cross, P. O. Box 61, Live Oak, Fla.

I am trying to locate some friends of mine whom I haven't seen since 1938. I don't remember their names, but I met them in the summer of 1936 when they were living in East Bennington, New Hampshire. There were about 12 or 14 in the family. They went to Antrim District School in 1937 and moved away about November of '37. They moved back in 1938 and then moved away again. They may be living in northern N. H. or Vt. The four of them that I knew would be between 14 and 18. If anyone has any information about them, please contact Francis R. DeCapot, 65 Amherst St., Nashua, N. H.

I want to contact Stephen Kolowoski from Chicago who was on the Secretary of Navy's yacht and at the Receiving Station in Washington. Also Joe Viediteh who was on the old Reuben James 245 in 1920—and William Jennings Bryan Guest from St. Louis who was on the old battleship, the New Jersey. Would also like to find William Wischertch from the Naval Magazine in Coco Solo and Naval Air Station along with William Henry Hanna Hurst from New Orleans who was on the old Flusser 289 in 1920. Please write L. W. Fraser, CGM, USN, 16th Fleet Staff, Orange, Texas.

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I am very anxious to contact my old buddy, former S/Sgt. Harry Rogers. We served with the 491st Bomb. Group H. He may be in Biloxi, Miss., or Mobile, Ala. I have been trying since October, 1945, to find him and any help you may be able to give me will be appreciated. Please write to George Paraspolo, 627 29th St., San Francisco, Calif.

For some time I have been trying to locate my father, George Franklin Watson. He was last known to be in Cleveland, Ohio. If any one has any information whatsoever about him, please write to G. F. Watson, 695 E. Utica St., Buffalo 11, N. Y.

I would like to contact Sgt. Percy Emerick, who was stationed at Fort Ord, California, 1940-1942, 3rd Inf., 7th Div. Please write to ex-Sgt. R. L. Hale, 1720 East Johns, Decatur, Illinois.

I am trying to find my buddy, Arthur Von Boot, or Bot. We worked together for the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania, in Pittsburgh, during the spring of 1902. He was a lineman and was headed for the southwestern gold fields. He knew me only by my nickname, "Si Perkins." Anyone knowing his present whereabouts, please write to H. H. Epler, 2102 Hollingsworth Street, New Kensington, Penna.

I would appreciate any information about Frank and Fred Reed of New Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The last known of Frank, he was still in Pennsylvania and Fred was somewhere on the West Coast. Anyone knowing of either Frank's or Fred's whereabouts, please write to M. M. Mausser, R.F.D. No. 1, Bernard, Iowa.

Will any soldier serving in Company A, 275th Engineers Bn., 75th Division, in Holland during the first part of 1944 who knew Cpl. F/5 Thomas L. Graham or Quentin Rall please write to Mrs. J. E. Graham, Artesia, New Mexico.

I would like to locate Ed La Vergue who was on the *USS Marblehead* at the time of her historic encounter with the Japanese. Please write J. O. Jernigan, 1014 W. Eastland Ave., Nashville, Tenn.

W. G. Carter, General Delivery, Tucson, Arizona wishes to locate Charles F. Head, about 59 years old, born in North Bay, Ontario, Canada. Would also like to find Ellsworth Head, adopted by Willis family at an early age. Charles and Ellsworth had another brother, Tom, and a sister, Leah. Would much appreciate any information concerning these people.

Paul "Duke" Byrnes, 934½ Forsythe St., Toledo, Ohio, would like to locate his old buddy, James "Sugar" Solyer with whom he worked in Nevada in '39. We worked together for five years with the Div. of Interior and his hometown was Germantown, Ohio. His last known whereabouts was on the U.S.S. Sands, in New York Harbor in 1940. Any knowing his present locality, please write to Paul "Duke" Byrnes.

W. H. McCarty, 965 Clinton St., Napa, California wants information of his two brothers, A. W. McCarty, whose nickname is "Buck," and W. F. McCarty, sometimes called "Bill."

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(OR IS IT?)

BY GROUCHO MARX

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that Little Dream House, without a trunk full of moolah? You think the carpenters are going to work free? Or the plumbers? Or the architects? Not those lads. They've been around. They're no dopes.

And how are you going to send that kid of yours to college, without the folding stuff?

Maybe you think he can work his way through by playing the flute.

If so, you're crazy. (Only three students have ever worked their way through college by playing the flute. And they had to stop eating for four years.)

And how are you going to do that world-traveling you've always wanted to do? Maybe you think you can stoke your way across, or scrub decks. Well, that's no good. I've tried it. It interferes with shipboard romances.

So—all seriousness aside—you'd better keep on saving, pal.

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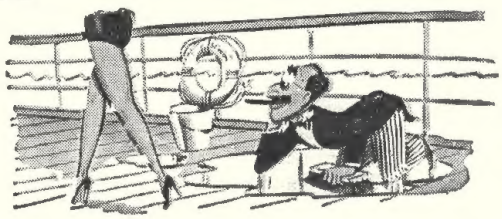

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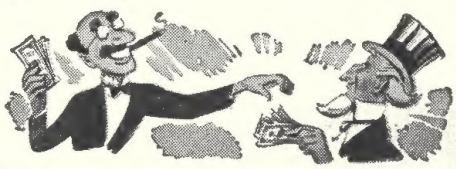

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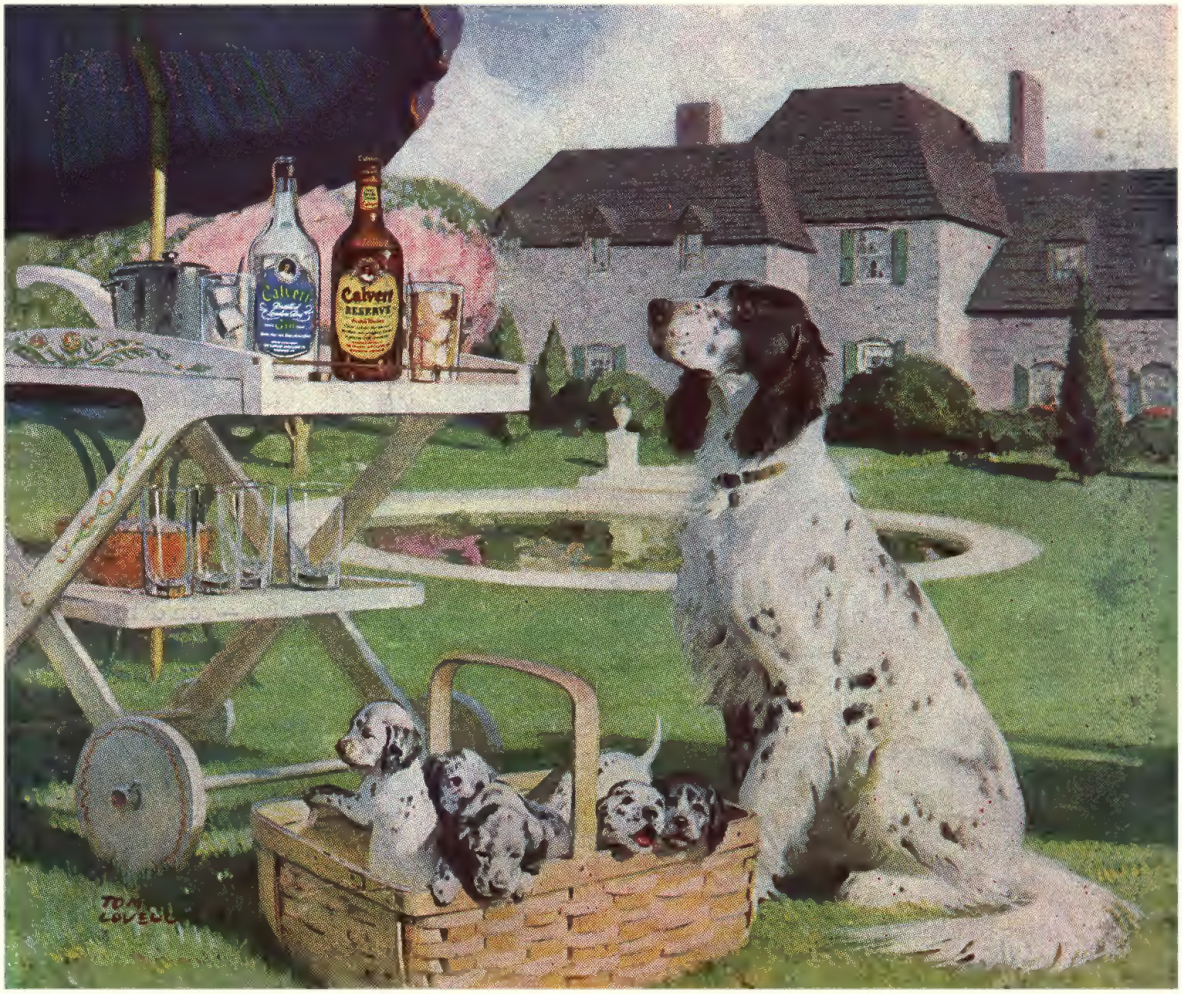

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